

# **WAR FOR THE NORTHWEST**

*A HISTORY AND TOUR GUIDE OF THE WAR OF 1812 CAMPAIGNS  
IN MICHIGAN, OHIO, AND CANADA*

**BY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Histories of the War of 1812 often concern the more "popular" aspects of that conflict. Perhaps the most famous incident concerns the birth of our national anthem, the *Star Spangled Banner*, written by Francis Scott Key while he was held on a British ship during the bombardment of Ft. McHenry in 1814. History also accords great recognition to General Andrew Jackson and his victory at New Orleans in 1815, fought after hostilities were formally closed by Great Britain and the United States. But overshadowed, or more accurately, overlooked for perhaps obvious reasons, are the defeats the American army suffered during several years of campaigning against British forces in Canada and the northwest states and territories of the United States.

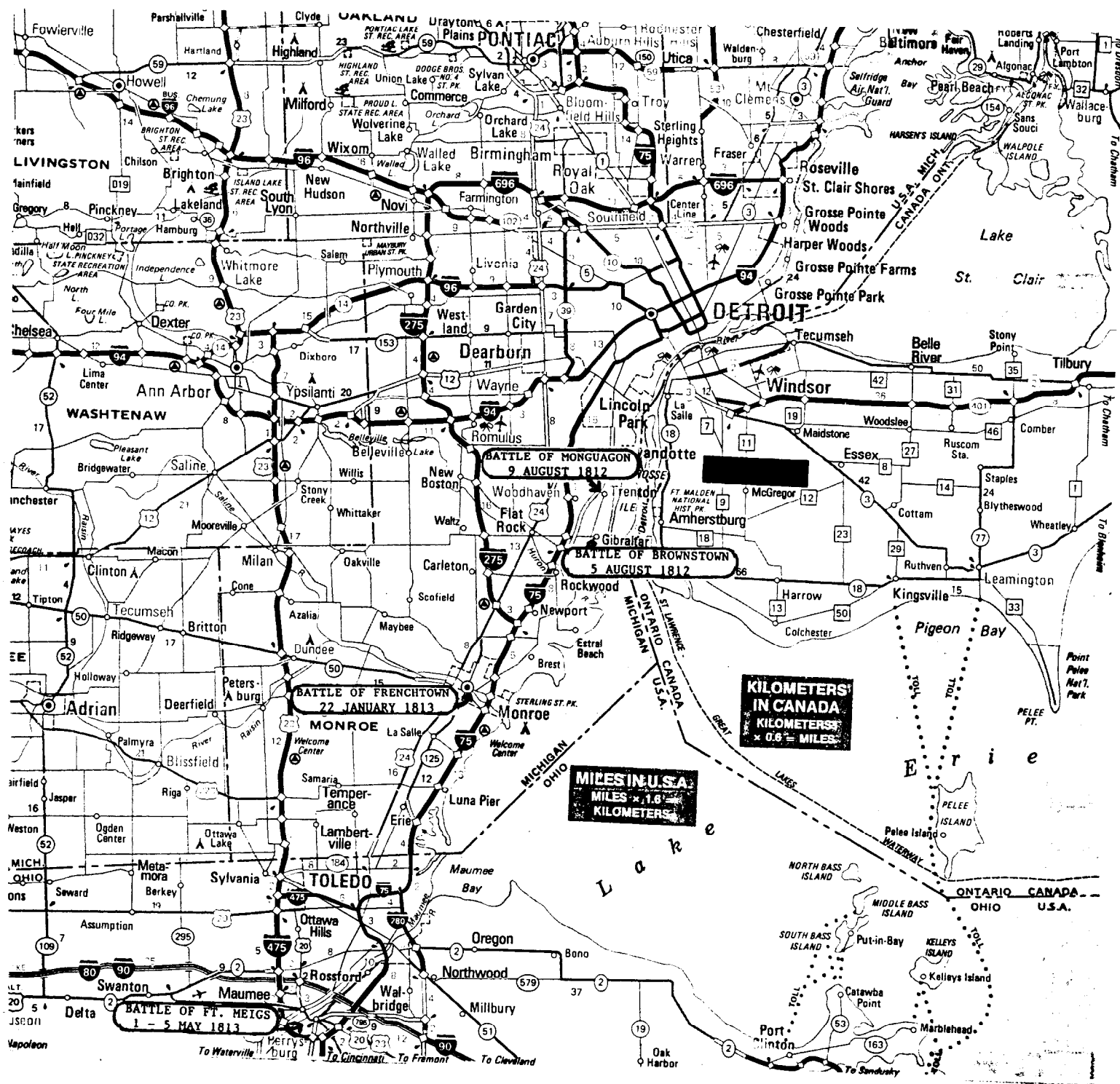
Such neglect has been accorded to the campaigns of the Northwestern Army fought in Southern Michigan and Northwest Ohio from 1812 to 1813. Beginning with General William Hull's surrender of Detroit to the British in August 1812, to the battle of Ft. Meigs in May 1813, U.S. forces suffered almost continual defeat at the hands of a small contingent of British regulars who enjoyed the strategic advantage of controlling the Great Lakes. When General William Henry Harrison took command of the Northwestern Army in 1812, he was to regain the loss of Detroit, secure the waterways along the coast of lake Erie, and invade Canada. General Harrison's attempt to redeem Hull's loss suffered many setbacks due to poor weather, inadequate supply, and significant losses at the battle of Frenchtown in January 1813. However, his gallant defense of Ft. Meigs, Ohio in May 1813 proved to be a turning point; U.S. forces would never again suffer a defeat in the Northwest.

This self-guided tour visits several important sites of Harrison's campaigns and leads to a better understanding of the reasons for U.S. failure and eventual success. This exercise offers valuable insight into leadership, logistics, and the application of the principles of war associated with the conduct of military operations in an undeveloped theater of war. The tour visits the sites of two significant battles of Harrison's campaign. The first is Monroe, Michigan, where the battle of Frenchtown (or River Raisin) was fought in January 1813. The tour there includes a visit to the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor's Center, along with several marked sites near the battlefield. The second area is Perrysburg, Ohio, the site of Ft. Meigs where Harrison's fort has been reconstructed to replicate the structure besieged by British forces in May 1813.

Each battlefield may be visited separately, or combined together for a comprehensive study of Harrison's campaign. At the beginning of each section of this guide, directions will explain how to approach the sites as part of the comprehensive tour, or as a separate tour.

The complete study of the Battle of Frenchtown takes approximately two hours. Plan for about 45 minutes for a stop at the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor's Center. The second portion includes a one hour trip from Monroe to Perrysburg, Ohio, and Ft. Meigs. Plan to spend at least 1.5 hours at the fort and about one hour at other stops. If you desire to conduct a complete tour of all the battlefield sites, plan on spending a full day to do so.

During your tour you will find little or no trappings of commercialization of these events; there are no wax museums, souvenir shops, or cycloramas. Places where a nation suffers defeat are seldom celebrated, however the battlefields where the U.S. Army fought this campaign are no less "hallowed ground" as any other fought in this nation. This guide is dedicated to those forgotten soldiers who gave their lives to our young nation in the hope that the eyes of the country will gaze upon their sacrifice once more.



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## OVERVIEW

### STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

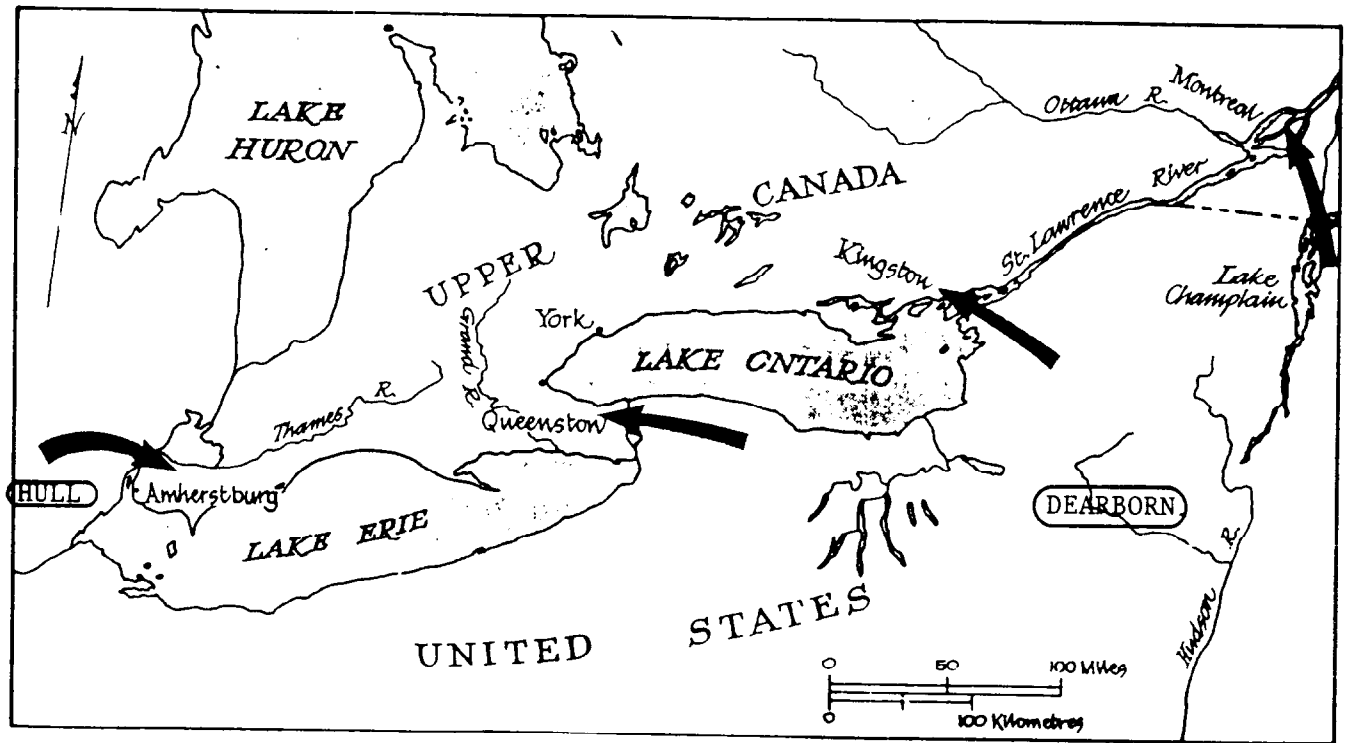
In 1812, U.S. Congressional support for war with Great Britain reflected a number of long standing grievances: British interference with U.S. trade, impressment of U.S. seamen, and affronts to U.S. Honor.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the British retained some Northwest posts in U.S. territory, controlled navigation on the Great Lakes, and encouraged the Indians to resist American expansion and to side with the British in the event of war against the United States.<sup>2</sup> Because an effective maritime response to British acts was not feasible, President Madison decided instead to expel the British from Canada and seize the territory to obtain redress for these injuries.<sup>3</sup>

Americans had several reasons to expect that a campaign against Canada would have a favorable outcome. The Canadian provinces were sparsely settled and the population had an uncertain loyalty to great Britain. Upper Canada (now Ontario) had fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, with close to a third estimated to be of American origin or sympathies.<sup>4</sup> On paper, the U.S. Army appeared imposing, with an authorized strength of over 35,000 men, but it could only muster about one third of that number.<sup>5</sup> Canada, however, could raise only about 7,000 troops and had little hope of reinforcement from Britain due to the war against Napoleon. Given this situation, many Americans were filled with thoughts of quick and glorious victory, particularly those settlers in the Northwest territories and states.

Before the war officially began, the anticipation of hostilities led the United States to dispatch Brigadier General William Hull to Detroit in May with an army of 2,000 men composed of Ohio militia and U.S. regulars, known collectively as the Northwestern Army. Hull's mission was to protect the Northwest frontier, hold Detroit and invade Canada, as part of a four pronged invasion of that country; the other three places being Niagara, Sackett's harbor and Montreal.

On July 12, a week after his arrival in Detroit, Hull crossed into Canada near present Windsor, Ontario. The British had good intelligence about Hull's army because they had captured all of his papers and military orders on a boat he had sent forward to Detroit. Because of Hull's greater numbers, the British forces garrisoned at Ft. Malden in Amherstburg did not directly oppose the invasion. Hull, however, hesitated to press on to Malden and attack the British garrison. When Hull received word that the U.S. post at Ft. Michilimackinac had surrendered to the British on 17 July, his hesitancy turned to panic. He ordered his army to recross the river, return to Ft. Detroit, and abandon Canada. Meanwhile,

## AMERICAN STRATEGY, SPRING 1812



Source: Pierre Berton, The Invasion of Canada (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 26.

the British had sent reinforcements to Amherstburg under command of Major General Sir Isaac Brock. Within a few days Brock laid siege to Detroit and played on Hull's fears of a massacre at the hands of the Indians to urge him to surrender.

On Sunday 16 August 1812, Hull surrendered Ft. Detroit and his Northwestern Army to British forces. What had began less than two months before as a promising, and to a degree, successful campaign to defend the Michigan territory, ended with the loss of not only Ft. Detroit, but Ft. Michilimackinac and Ft. Dearborn (at Chicago) as well. The loss of these important outposts put the American settlers in the remaining Northwest territories of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois in peril from resurgent Indian tribes under the leadership of the great Shawnee Chief Tecumseh.

### **HARRISON'S WINTER CAMPAIGN (SEPTEMBER 1812 - JANUARY 1813)**

Hull's defeat shocked an incredulous nation and inspired the United States to recover the lost territory and its national prestige.<sup>6</sup> President James Madison and Secretary of War William Eustis now faced the difficult problem of building a second Northwestern Army, as well as finding an able commander. They eventually appointed William Henry Harrison, the governor of the Indiana Territory, to command the second Northwestern Army.

Harrison was well qualified for his position. He was born in Virginia in 1773 and decided early in his schooling to pursue his great interest in military history. In 1791 he obtained an appointment to the U.S. Army as an ensign and he served during the Indian wars of the 1790's. His military training was enhanced by his service as an aide-de-camp to General Anthony Wayne. He fought at the battle of Fallen Timbers and was a signatory to the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Following his marriage, he resigned his commission, and at age twenty four became the Secretary of the Northwestern Territory. In 1800, after Indiana became a separate territory, he was appointed as its governor, with extraordinary powers to make treaties with the Indians as well as to conduct military operations.<sup>7</sup>

However, Harrison was not the only officer considered for the command and for several weeks there was some question about who actually held the authority. Prior to Hull's surrender, Eustis had directed Brigadier General James Winchester to gather men to reinforce Hull at Detroit.<sup>8</sup> Winchester had been a captain in the Revolutionary War and had no experience in military or civilian affairs in the Northwest until his appointment as a general in March 1812.<sup>9</sup> Almost simultaneously, the governor of Kentucky offered Harrison a commission as a major general in the Kentucky militia and President Madison offered him an appointment as a brigadier general in the U.S. Army.<sup>10</sup> The issue became which rank



WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON



*From a painting attributed to Rembrandt Peale.*

William Henry Harrison, in the dress uniform of the War of 1812.

The original portrait showed Harrison in civilian dress as Delegate from Northwest Territory in 1800. The Major General's uniform was superimposed in 1813.

Source: Freeman Cleaves, Old Tippecanoe, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939).

Harrison could exercise in respect to the militia and to Winchester, to whom he would be junior if he accepted Madison's appointment.<sup>11</sup> Thus military operations suffered from a lack of direction throughout August and September.

Before the command issue could be resolved, Indians besieged the U.S. garrison at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. To save it required quick action. Harrison persuaded Winchester that his Kentucky commission took precedence over Winchester's, and he proceeded to take the Kentucky troops to relieve Ft. Wayne. According to Harrison, his command consisted of three regiments of Kentucky troops and Colonel Wells's regulars, a total of about 2,100 men.<sup>12</sup> Harrison wrote Eustis on August 29 saying, "It appeared to me Sir, that it was necessary that someone should undertake the general direction of affairs here and I have done it." He and his troops arrived at Ft. Wayne on September 12, but the enemy had already abandoned its siege. On September 18 Winchester arrived at Ft. Wayne and Harrison turned over command of the army to him. Winchester's assumption of command did not please the troops, however, and cast a pall over army operations.

Unity of command was established on September 24, when Harrison received word that Madison had appointed him as the commander of the Northwestern Army. Winchester was willing to serve under Harrison, who appointed him to command the left wing of the army. Harrison's objectives were to provide protection for the entire northwestern frontier (stretching from Ohio to the Mississippi River), recapture Detroit, and move against Upper Canada. He was given complete liberty to conduct the campaign as he saw fit and there was no doubt that this was to be an offensive campaign.<sup>13</sup> On October 3, when Harrison took command of the army at Defiance, Ohio, he was greeted with cheers.<sup>14</sup>

Harrison's campaign strategy was to concentrate over 4,000 troops at the Maumee rapids, and when he had gathered a million rations there, to advance to Detroit. He used three converging columns for command and control of the troops and supplies provided by Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Winchester commanded the left wing, composed of Colonel Wells's regulars and four Kentucky regiments, based at Fort Defiance.<sup>15</sup> Brigadier General Edward Tupper commanded twelve hundred Ohio militia, who formed the center column along Hull's old trail and acted as a general supply column for the Army. On the right, the Virginia and Pennsylvania militia formed at Upper Sandusky, Ohio, under the direct command of Harrison.<sup>16</sup> Each column was to protect its own supply route with blockhouses.

Harrison faced an extremely difficult task of gathering supplies, men, and rations during the fall. Transportation was difficult, and other than Hull's crude road, there were no

JAMES WINCHESTER



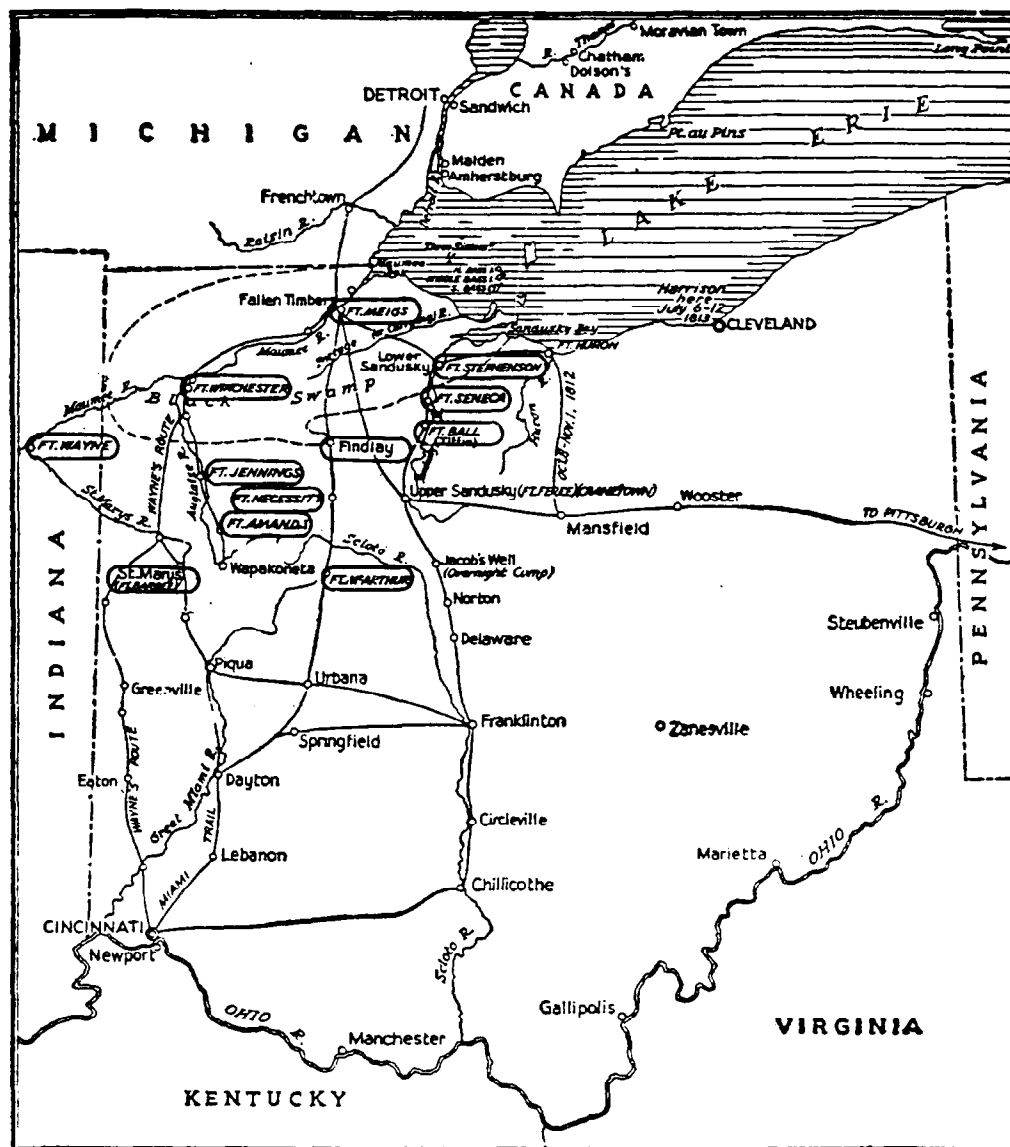
Source: James Winchester, "Papers and Orderly Book of Brigadier General James Winchester," ed., Clarence M. Burton. Michigan Historical Collections 31 (1902).

trails that could accommodate an army with supply wagons in Northwestern Ohio. A dominant feature was poor water drainage, particularly the region called the Black Swamp, an area 35-40 miles wide and 100-120 miles long between the Sandusky river and the Miami river.<sup>17</sup> It was passable in winter when the ground froze, but almost impassable any other time. Many rivers existed but were often too shallow or could be used by boats for only short distances. In the fall and winter the waterways froze, thereby limiting their use. As a result, the terrain and weather of Ohio caused the loss of much equipment, time, and even lives, and was as much an enemy to be overcome as the British.

The difficulties with transportation and the inability to stockpile supplies in sufficient quantities shattered Harrison's optimistic belief that he could retake Detroit in 1812. He placed most of the blame on the "imbecility and incompetence of the public agents and the villainy of the contractors" for the delay in procuring rations.<sup>18</sup> Harrison even considered advancing when he had only 800,000 rations. But due to the difficulty of logistics, he believed he could not advance until February or March. He told Eustis that a better expenditure of resources would be to build a fleet and obtain control of Lake Erie. So by the end of 1812, despite enormous expenditure of effort and money, Harrison's troops were ill-housed, poorly clothed, inadequately fed, and short of all supplies.

Winchester's force particularly suffered since it had formed in September and the troops had no winter clothing.<sup>19</sup> On December 10 the army ran out of flour because freezing weather kept resupply from reaching them. The shortage of food and exposure to the cold caused men to suffer from sickness, fever, and frostbite. Over one hundred men perished to disease and the elements, and about three hundred were constantly sick.<sup>20</sup> Winchester's camp along the Maumee River was described as "Fort Starvation," and one private wrote on Christmas eve, "Our sufferings at this place have been greater than if we had been in a severe battle. . . The camp has become a loathsome place."<sup>21</sup> Ammunition supply was so critical that when soldiers died, no rifle salutes and military honors were rendered at the funeral in order to conserve ammunition.<sup>22</sup> The effect the winter weather had on operations may be seen when Winchester tried to move his army to the rapids on December 30. The army proceeded slowly, pulling baggage on sleds through snow almost two feet deep.<sup>23</sup> Because of the weakened condition of the men, it took eleven days to march forty miles.

# AREA OF OPERATIONS IN OHIO 1812-1813



Source: Freeman Cleaves, Old Tippecanoe, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939).

## THE BATTLE OF FRENCHTOWN - 22 JANUARY 1813

In the meantime, the British forces had been active. Colonel Henry Procter had been left in command at Ft. Malden when Brock returned to the Niagara frontier, where he met his death at the battle of Queenston Heights on October 10, 1812. Though Procter's orders were to cease offensive operations, he did make some limited probes to the Miami Rapids, threatening Harrison's planned rally and supply point. He also established a forward post at Frenchtown on the River Raisin.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, Winchester managed to get his 1,300 men to the Rapids on January 10, despite cold weather which had exacted a severe toll. On January 13 he received news from Frenchtown that the British were harassing the residents and threatening to destroy the town. The British force at Frenchtown consisted of fifty militia, about 200 Indians, and a three-pounder artillery piece manned by regular artillerists.<sup>25</sup> Even though his orders from Harrison were not to advance beyond the rapids, Winchester decided to take action. The Kentucky militia officers were anxious for an immediate advance, however Colonel Wells voiced dissent. Winchester decided to strike, and he ordered Lieutenant Colonel William Lewis with over six hundred men to advance to Frenchtown, engage the British, secure the town, and capture any supplies.<sup>26</sup>

Lewis' troops advanced thirty-five miles north of the rapids along Hull's old road and across the ice of Lake Erie, close to the shore. They reached Frenchtown on the afternoon of January 18. The British detected the Americans as they approached the village and fired on them with artillery. Lewis quickly ordered his men to charge the enemy position and after three hours of fighting the British retreated into the woods beyond Frenchtown. Lewis' force not only liberated the small village, but also captured 30 barrels of flour, 2,000 pounds of beef, and a large amount of wheat. Casualties for both sides were relatively light. The Americans lost twelve killed and 55 wounded. The British admitted a loss of only four killed, but the Americans claimed fifteen enemy were killed or captured, most of them Indians.<sup>27</sup>

Lewis reported the victory to Winchester, who led reinforcements to Frenchtown on January 20, bringing the total U.S. force there to about one thousand men.<sup>28</sup> Harrison received word of this unauthorized advance on the 20th, and even though it had occurred without his permission, he believed the position at Frenchtown had to be held. Hence he began efforts to help his subordinate since he feared that the enemy might counterattack Winchester at any time.<sup>29</sup>

Even though Winchester had taken his objective he failed to prepare a proper defense, which eventually led his command to disaster.<sup>30</sup> Convinced that the British would not

KENTUCKY MILITIA AT THE RIVER RAISIN, JANUARY 1813



KENTUCKY MILITIA, AT THE RIVER RAISIN, JANUARY 1813

Source: Erna Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army 1775 - 1939 (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989).

counterattack, Winchester deployed his troops in exposed positions with their backs to the river, failed to distribute ammunition and powder, and did not deploy pickets to warn of an enemy approach.<sup>31</sup> Winchester effectively ignored his own principle that "A loose, careless army is never safe, a vigilant & alert one is never in danger."<sup>32</sup> He positioned his troops at some distance north of the river, with the Kentucky militia occupying enclosed picketed gardens facing north in a rough semi-circle. He positioned the Seventeenth Infantry in an open field 100 yards to the right of the militia, their only protection being a small rail fence. Winchester also established his headquarters in a house on the south bank of the river, about three-quarters of a mile away. On January 21 Colonel Wells urged Winchester to send out scouts and begged him to distribute the ammunition to the men. However, Winchester ignored Well's advice and spoke contemptuously of an attack.<sup>33</sup>

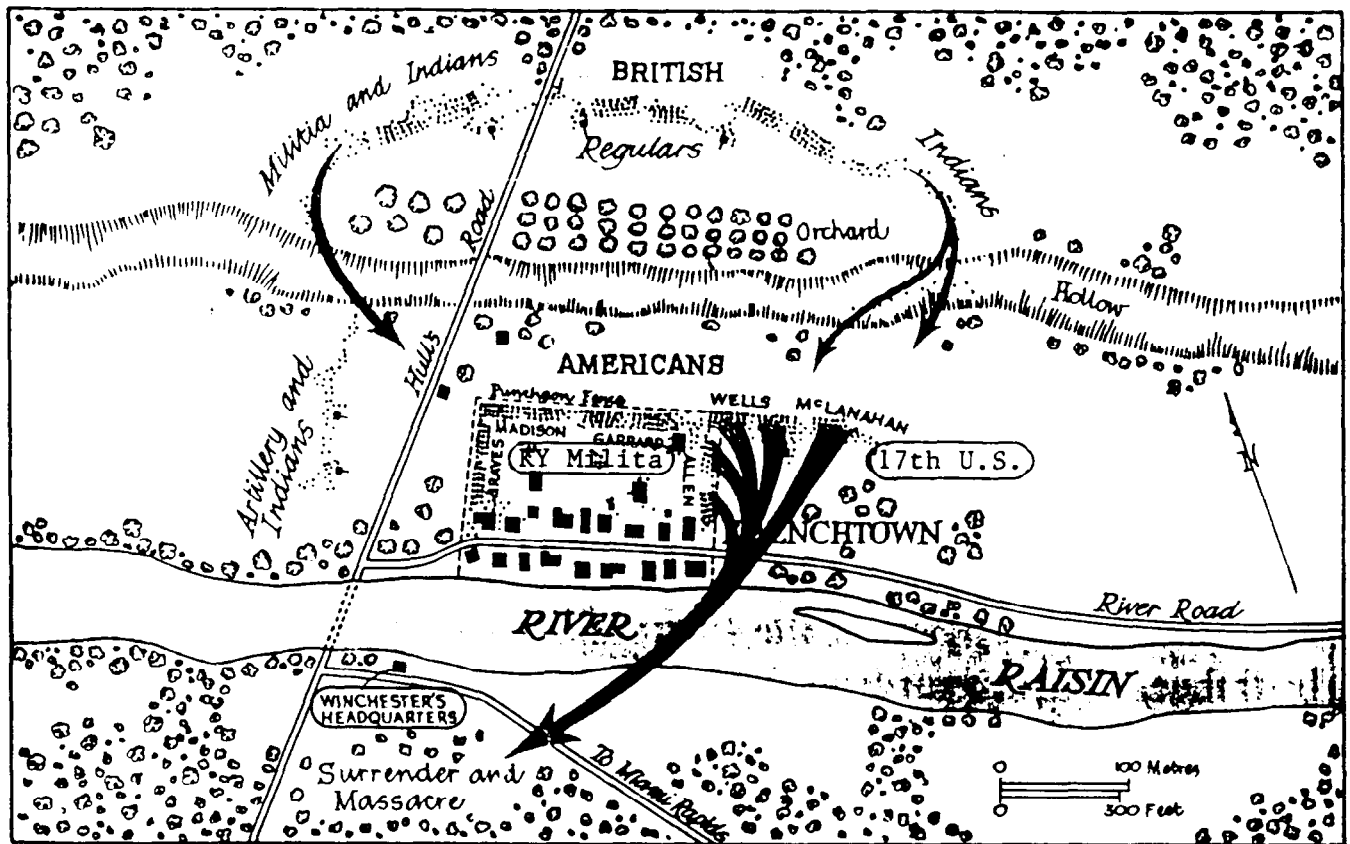
Meanwhile, Colonel Procter was determined to cross the frozen Detroit River and regain his lost position before Winchester could fortify it. He assembled 597 regulars and militia and about eight hundred Indians under the leadership of the Wyandotte chief Roundhead.<sup>34</sup> He also had six artillery pieces that were mounted on sleds. Two hours before dawn on January 22, Procter's army advanced within musket range of the unsuspecting American troops. His artillery and regulars formed the center; the Indians were on the right, and militia and Indians on his left. A British officer noted the lack of American security and thought the enemy could be taken sleeping in their beds, but reveille sounded and the Americans saw the approaching British.<sup>35</sup>

Though surprised by the enemy, the Kentuckians on the left flank concentrated their fire on the British artillery crews and prominent enemy officers. Their marksmanship wreaked havoc among the artillerymen causing some guns to be abandoned. The British regulars attempted to charge the militia's position, but the accurate and deadly fire of the riflemen was too much for them. Though the Kentuckians held, the U.S. Seventeenth Infantry was exposed to murderous artillery and musket fire on the open right flank. Twenty minutes after the battle began, the unprotected regulars began to fall back. Winchester soon arrived, still in his bedclothes, but failed to rally the retreating regulars.

By this time the Indians had moved to the flank and rear of the Americans. As the regulars fled across the frozen river toward the road to the rapids, the Indians formed a pocket to prevent their escape. Hundreds were caught, killed, and scalped by the warriors charged with the rage of battle.<sup>36</sup> Small bands of men tried to surrender but were shot down. Others, such as those led by Captain Richard Matson, removed their shoes so their footprints in the snow would deceive the Indians. This group of about 30 men were the only regulars to



BATTLE OF FRENCHTOWN, 22 JANUARY 1813



Source: Pierre Berton, The Invasion of Canada, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980), 294.

escape capture or death. Winchester and Lewis were captured by Chief Roundhead, who stripped them of their uniforms and turned them over to Procter.<sup>37</sup>

As the American right collapsed, the Kentuckians on the left, now commanded by Major George Madison, coolly repelled three more British assaults.<sup>38</sup> Their losses after an hour of fighting were only five killed and 40 wounded. The British however lost about a third of their attacking force. Procter asked Winchester to compel the Kentuckians to surrender, convincing him that as prisoners he would protect them from Indian vengeance.<sup>39</sup> Winchester agreed, having already seen half his army massacred, even though he technically was no longer in command.

When a party of men with a white flag approached Madison's position, the Kentuckians thought the British wanted a truce. Madison was "surprised and mortified" by the news of Winchester's capture, and his note of surrender was met with indignation by the men. However, their ammunition was almost exhausted and the officers felt resistance could not last much longer. Madison consented, but only after receiving a promise from Procter that the prisoners and wounded be protected from the Indians. When these Kentuckians who had suffered months of famine, sickness, and hardship in the wilderness were captured at Frenchtown, a British officer remarked:

They had the air of men to whom cleanliness was a virtue unknown. . . scarcely an individual was in possession of a great coat or cloak. . . their long hair fell matted and uncombed over their cheeks. . . [which] gave them an air of wildness and savageness.<sup>40</sup>

Concerned that Harrison would appear at any moment with reinforcements, Procter insisted that the prisoners depart for Ft. Malden immediately. He did leave about eighty of the most severely wounded Americans and promised to send sleighs or other transport as soon as possible. The next morning about two hundred Indians entered Frenchtown in a drunken and agitated state and began to plunder the village. They stripped the wounded and killed those who could not move. The Indians set several buildings on fire and many Americans perished in the flames. The British reported taking 495 prisoners, whom they marched to Canada and eventually paroled. Only about thirty men escaped out of Winchester's entire force.<sup>41</sup> The British losses amounted to 24 killed and 58 wounded.

Harrison learned of the defeat as he was trying to collect reinforcements to assist Winchester and called a council of war. The army had no artillery, most of the men had been marching for days, and they faced a sizable British force. Fearing that his own contingent might be defeated as well, Harrison returned to the rapids with his troops. Months of

planning and preparation were now dashed by this debacle. He wrote to the secretary of war that the advance had been made without his consent and contrary to his orders. In the words of Harrison the defeat at Frenchtown was "total and complete" and one of the worst U.S. defeats during the War of 1812.<sup>42</sup>

This loss greatly shocked the Americans, particularly those in Kentucky, whose families mourned the loss of their sons. The loss of another entire army dealt a severe blow to the war spirit in a state that had dreamed of a quick victory against the British. However, the defeat raised a new determination to avenge the loss, particularly because of Procter's failure to prevent the massacre by the Indians. The rally cry of "Remember the River Raisin" would be heard whenever Kentuckians engaged their enemy, a cry finally fulfilled in Canada at the battle of the Thames in October 1813.

### **HARRISON'S SPRING CAMPAIGN AND THE BATTLE OF FORT MEIGS (FEBRUARY - MAY 1813)**

Harrison was now forced on the defensive and retreated to the Portage River, about thirty miles from the Miami Rapids. Even though his plans were upset, he immediately began to fortify his advance posts, accumulate supplies, and reorganize his army. On February 1, 1813 Harrison returned to the rapids with an army of two thousand militia from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky.

To defend his position, Harrison constructed Fort Meigs on a high bluff on the south bank of the Maumee River, a short distance downstream from the old Fallen Timbers battlefield on the opposite bank. The task of construction fell upon Captain Eleazer D. Wood of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The fort covered about eight acres and was strongly stockade, with logs fifteen feet long and set three feet into the ground. There were seven blockhouses, five artillery batteries, powder magazines, and storehouses.<sup>43</sup> The completed fort included the construction of traverses, mounds of earth twelve feet high and twenty feet thick at the base, across the length of the fort. These were designed to shield the men from the effects of incoming artillery fire.<sup>44</sup> Throughout February, Wood supervised the construction of the fort, which progressed at a quick pace.

Harrison still faced a severe supply problem which was not helped by the new Secretary of War, John Armstrong, who tried to assume a greater role in operational planning. He established the maximum strength of Harrison's army at 7,000 regulars and reduced appropriations for supplies to control what he believed had been an undue waste of

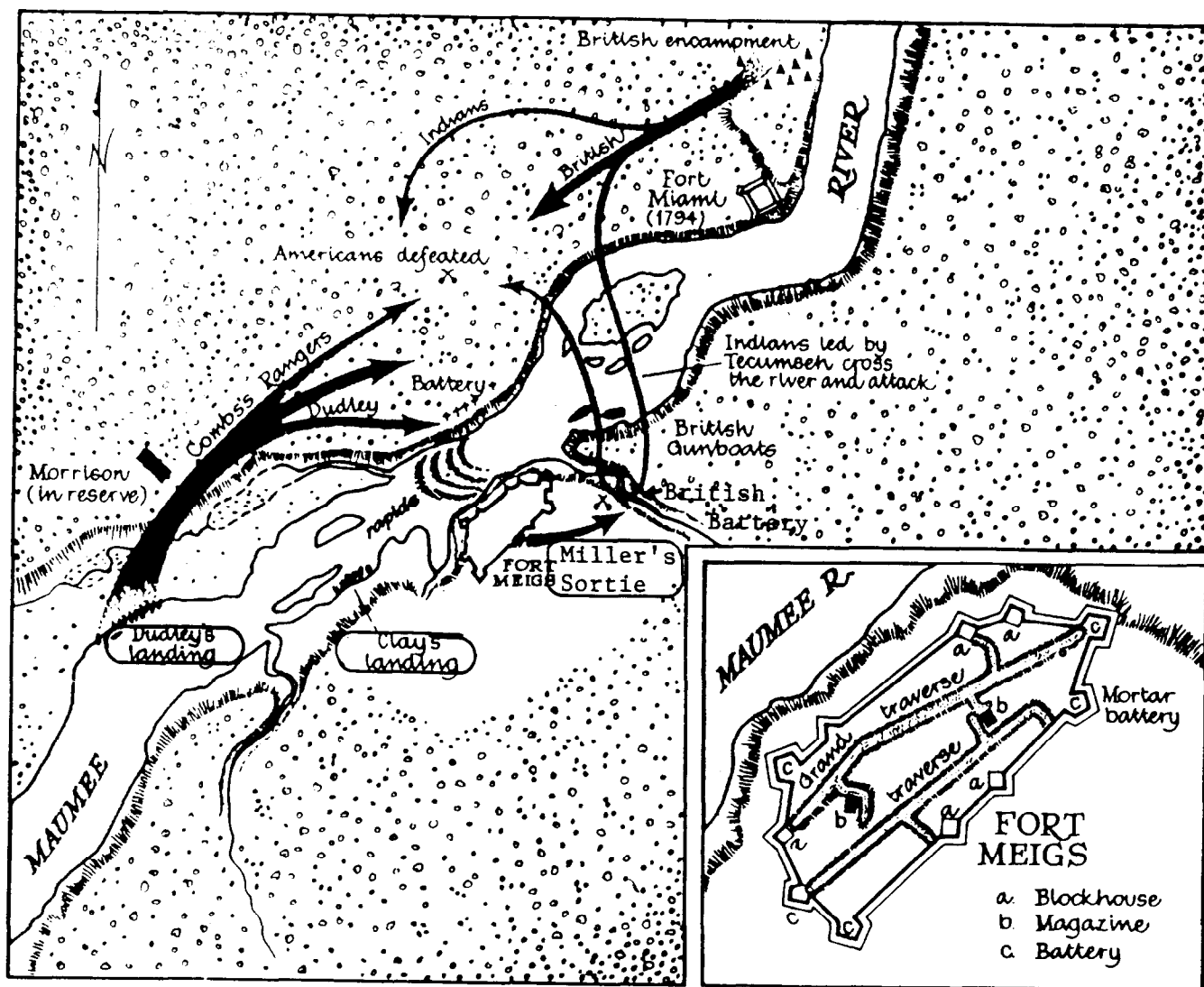
resources.<sup>45</sup> Armstrong did inform Harrison that Washington was giving top priority to building a fleet to gain control of Lake Erie. He told Harrison to hold his position in Ohio and not advance towards Malden until the fleet could be completed in May. Armstrong also ordered Harrison not to call for any more militia and to rely if possible exclusively on regular troops newly authorized by Congress. If Harrison could not fill the regular regiments with recruits in time, he could use the militia only in an emergency.<sup>46</sup>

Harrison was already experiencing an emergency due to the short term of militia service, and his chief concern was trying to keep enough soldiers in the field for a spring campaign. The Pennsylvania and Virginia militia departed on April 2, leaving only 500 men to garrison the fort.<sup>47</sup> Harrison urged Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky and Governor Meigs to provide more volunteers. Shelby promised 3,000 men and Meigs agreed to provide two regiments of Ohio militia.<sup>48</sup> Throughout April, through his own exertions and without Washington's help, Harrison slowly managed to amass troops from all quarters at Ft. Meigs. He obtained the Ohio regiments, the Seventeenth and Nineteenth U.S. Regulars (greatly understrength); a few Pennsylvanians elected to stay. By April 28, Harrison had almost 1,100 men at the fort in a very strong position to defend against British attack.<sup>49</sup> He told Meigs "the enemy little dream of the bitter pill I have prepared for them."<sup>50</sup>

Harrison's intelligence indicated the enemy was planning an attack. British officers had been seen surveying the ground opposite Ft. Meigs for possible artillery sites. Procter now had 984 militia and regulars, and Tecumseh had gathered almost 1,500 Indians. Together they planned to execute a carefully prepared attack on Ft. Meigs. On April 23 ships transported Procter's army to the mouth of the Miami River on Lake Erie, where he met Tecumseh.<sup>51</sup> Procter and Tecumseh agreed on a plan of attack and moved their camp to the site of Fort Miamis on the left bank of the river about two and a half miles downstream from Ft. Meigs. During incessant rain on April 28, the British prepared four artillery positions directly across the river from the fort. Procter also had artillery on two gunboats he brought up the Maumee. The Indians crossed the river, encircled the fort and established positions where they could fire upon the fort within musket range. By dawn on April 30, everything was in place.<sup>52</sup> On the eve of the impending battle, Harrison issued a general order reminding his men that he was the pupil of the "immortal Wayne," and encouraged the hope of victory and glory by saying, "To your posts then fellow Soldiers & remember that the eyes of your Country are upon you."<sup>53</sup>

Procter began the bombardment of Ft. Meigs on May 1; it continued for four days. During the first three days alone, the British fired 1106 shells but U.S. casualties were only six killed and eleven wounded.<sup>54</sup> There was little damage to the fort and the traverses were

# BATTLE OF FT. MEIGS, MAY 1-5 1813



Source: Pierre Berton, Flames Across the Border: The Canadian-American Tragedy 1813-1814 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1981), 118.

more than adequate to protect the men. Since the Americans were low on ammunition, Harrison's guns literally returned British fire. Harrison even offered his men a measure of whiskey for every British cannon ball turned in to the magazine keeper.<sup>55</sup> Though under continuous bombardment in miserable rainy weather, the Americans morale remained high due to their good protection. On May 3 a company of British gunners crossed the river with three artillery pieces and establish an artillery battery about three hundred yards east of the fort, which gave them a cross-fire.

Before midnight on May 4 a messenger arrived informing Harrison that Brigadier General Green Clay was two hours away on the Maumee river with 1,200 Kentucky troops Shelby had sent.<sup>56</sup> Harrison quickly developed a plan. He told Clay to land about eight hundred men on the north bank of the Maumee where they would attack the British artillery positions, spike the cannon, and then retreat to the safety of the fort.<sup>57</sup> The remaining four hundred troops would land on the south side of the river, fight through the Indians, and enter the fort. While the Kentuckians were destroying the artillery and distracting the Indians, Harrison would send a force from the fort to destroy the British battery established three hundred yards away.<sup>58</sup>

Clay directed Lieutenant Colonel William Dudley to make the attack on the batteries. Dudley's landing was successful and he advanced in three columns a mile and a half to the unsuspecting British emplacements, successfully routed the British gun crews, and spiked eleven cannon, all without the loss of a man. His force was then supposed to withdraw under the cover of the fort's guns, but his left column continued to chase the enemy toward the main British camp and away from the fort. Dudley decided to support the errant attack and ordered his men to rush into the woods.<sup>59</sup>

Procter reacted quickly to these events and ordered a counterattack by his regulars and some Indians. The British quickly broke up Dudley's attack and recaptured their batteries. The Americans were surrounded and Dudley was killed and scalped. Only about 150 Americans managed to make their way to Ft. Meigs. What followed was almost a replay of Frenchtown. As the Americans were being led to captivity, a large number of Indians fired indiscriminately into the prisoners. The British escort attempted to fend off the attack and one British soldier was killed, but Procter made no attempt to stop the massacre and almost forty Americans died. When Tecumseh arrived, he intervened, threatening to kill the next Indian who harmed a prisoner.<sup>60</sup> When he asked Procter why he allowed such crimes, Procter is reported to have said, "Your Indians can not be commanded." Tecumseh then replied in a disdainful manner, "Begone, You are unfit to command; go and put on petticoats."<sup>61</sup>

GREEN CLAY



*Green Clay*

Source: Benson J. Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook of the War of 1812 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869)

## TECUMSEH SAVING PRISONER



Tecumseh saving American prisoners during the Battle for Fort Meigs.  
(Courtesy of Indiana Historical Society Library.)

Source: Harry L. Coles, The War of 1812 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).



Meanwhile, the remainder of Clay's force landed on the south shore. Clay's force was observed by the enemy and came under long range artillery and musket fire. As Clay's men attempted to break through the Indian cordon, Harrison sent a party of volunteers and regulars out of the fort to assist them. After the Americans linked up, they began to pursue the Indians into the woods, much as Dudley had done. Harrison observed this and quickly sent an order to them to return to the fort, thereby avoiding another disaster.

While the action on the left raged, Harrison dispatched Colonel John Miller with three hundred and fifty men in a sortie against the British battery below the fort. Under Miller's strict command the Americans held their fire until within range, fired a volley in unison, charged and captured the battery along with 42 prisoners.<sup>62</sup> Miller withdrew after spiking the guns and before the British and Indians could counterattack. Though Miller's sortie was successful, it was not without cost, as the Americans suffered 28 killed and 25 wounded.<sup>63</sup>

Both sides now had to reevaluate their forces and positions. As a result of the battles outside the fort and the bombardment, Harrison reported 81 killed and 189 wounded. However, even with the loss of half the Kentucky militia, his force had been bolstered by Clay's contingent.<sup>64</sup> Though the British had lost only 14 killed, 47 wounded and 42 prisoners, Procter found he was in no position to continue the investment. The Indians grew impatient and slowly began to evaporate into the woods to enjoy their plunder.<sup>65</sup> The Canadian militia were reluctant to continue and told Procter that they must return home to plant their spring crops in order to avoid a famine in the fall. This left Procter with about four hundred regulars, less than a fourth of his force. On May 6 Procter demanded that Harrison surrender, but the only thing Harrison agreed to was a truce to exchange prisoners. On May 9 the British boarded their boats, fired a few final salvoes at Ft. Meigs, and returned to Amherstburg.<sup>66</sup>

The Battle of Ft. Meigs can be considered a turning point for the war in the Northwest. Though the defeat of Dudley's regiment entailed a great loss, the survivors, along with Clay's remaining regiment, bolstered the fort by over five hundred men. Even though both sides claimed a victory, Harrison was now in a good position to carry the war to the British. Thousands of volunteers from Ohio flocked to the fort, but Harrison could not employ them due to Armstrong's orders to wait until the U.S. recruited more regulars and gained control of Lake Erie.<sup>67</sup>

The strength of the U.S. position in the Northwest increased during the summer of 1813. In late July, Procter, growing desperate due to his own failing logistics and the Indians' demand for action, renewed his invasion of Ohio.<sup>68</sup> He made another attack on Ft. Meigs, now commanded by Clay, but it proved inconclusive.<sup>69</sup> Procter's invasion reached a

culminating point on August 1, when he attacked the U.S. garrison at Ft. Stephenson (now Fremont, Ohio) with four hundred regulars. During the attack, the 160 Americans commanded by Major George Croghan inflicted heavy casualties upon the British regulars, killing and wounding almost a quarter of the force.<sup>70</sup> After this severe loss, Procter returned to Amherstburg and never again set foot in Ohio.

On 10 September 1813, a U.S. naval force under the command of Commodore Oliver H. Perry set sail from Presque Isle (Erie, Pennsylvania) and engaged the British fleet, commanded by Captain Robert H. Barclay, near Put-In-Bay, Ohio. Perry's skillful maneuvering and well trained crews destroyed the British fleet during the six hour battle. Perry's dispatch to Harrison signaled the dramatic change of the strategic situation in the Northwest when he wrote, "We have met the enemy and they are ours. . . ."<sup>71</sup> With U.S. control of Lake Erie, Harrison made final preparations for the invasion of Canada, where Procter had already begun to evacuate Ft. Malden.

The tide of war in the Northwest fully turned to the United States' favor from this point on. Harrison successfully invaded Canada on September 27 and his army chased the retreating Procter and Tecumseh to Moravian Town on the Thames river. The resulting battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813 earned Harrison an everlasting place in American military history. The Americans quickly routed the British and Tecumseh was killed. Among the seized baggage and equipment the Americans recovered the regimental colors captured from Hull, Winchester, and Dudley.<sup>72</sup> They could finally be brought home.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

There are several excellent primary and secondary accounts of William Henry Harrison's campaign in the Northwest in 1812 and 1813. The most useful primary source is Logan Esarey's Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, Volume II (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922). Other accounts by participants include a British perspective of the campaigns by John Richardson in Richardson's War of 1812, edited by Alexander C. Casselman (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co, 1912). The standard secondary account is Benson J. Lossing's The Pictorial Fieldbook of the War of 1812, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869). Building upon Lossing is Alec R. Gilpin's The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1958). A recent Canadian view of the campaigns can be found in The War of 1812 Land Operations (Canada: Macmillan of Canada, 1983) by George F.G. Stanley.

Literature about the battle of Frenchtown includes an American account of the battle and the massacre by Elias Darnell in A Journal . . . of the Kentucky Volunteers and Regulars Commanded by General Winchester in . . . 1812-1813, (Philadelphia: Lippencott, Grambo, and Co., 1854). Also useful is a collection of General Orders contained in the "Papers and Orderly Book of Brigadier General James Winchester," edited by Clarence M. Burton, Michigan Historical Collections 31 (1902). For an account of events subsequent to the battle see Thomas P. Dudley, "Battle and Massacre at Frenchtown, Michigan, January 1813," Michigan Historical Collections 22 (1894): 436-443. Secondary accounts of the campaign and battle are provided in G. Glenn Clift, Remember the Raisin! Kentucky and Kentuckians in the Battles and Massacres at Frenchtown Michigan Territory, in the War of 1812, (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1961). Especially valuable is Clift's compilation of rosters of the U.S. troops at company level and biographical sketches of the key leaders.

Sources about the battle of Ft. Meigs include an excellent diary and orderly book kept by Daniel L. Cushing, an artillery officer during the campaign, in Captain Cushing in the War of 1812, edited by Harlow Lindley, (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944). An account of Dudley's disaster is found in "Campaign of 1813 on the Ohio River: Sortie at Fort Meigs, May 1813" edited by G. Glenn Clift, Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 67 (July 1969): 260-268. Miller's attack upon the British flanking battery is told by Nathaniel Vernon in "The Pittsburg Blues and the War of 1812: The Memoir of Private Nathaniel Vernon," edited by John C. Fredriksen, Pennsylvania History 56 (July 1989): 196-212. The most recent and complete secondary account of the Ft. Meigs engagement is Men of Patriotism, Courage, and Enterprise!: Fort Meigs in the War of 1812 (Canton, Ohio: Daring Books, 1985) by Larry L. Nelson.

## CHRONOLOGY

<u>1812</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
Aug	Brig Gen Winchester organizes reinforcements for Hull; Harrison appointed Major General in Kentucky militia.
22 Aug	Harrison appointed Brigadier General by President Madison.
28 Aug	Harrison receives word of Hull's surrender.
29 Aug	Ft. Wayne besieged by Indians; Harrison moves to relieve with 2,000 men.
12 Sep	Harrison's army arrives at Ft. Wayne; Indians abandon siege.
17 Sep	President Madison appoints Harrison as commander of the Northwestern Army.
18 Sep	Winchester arrives at Ft. Wayne; Harrison relinquishes command.
22 Sep - 1 Oct	Winchester moves army to Ft. Defiance.
24 Sep	Harrison learns of appointment as Commander of Northwestern Army.
3 Oct	Harrison takes command at Defiance; Appoints Winchester to command Left Wing of the army.
Sep - Dec	Movement and assembly of troops, supplies, and provisions in N.W. Ohio. Goal of gathering 4,000 troops and one million rations at the Maumee Rapids.

## ACTIONS OF LEFT WING COMMANDED BY WINCHESTER

- 1 - 30 Oct     Army encamped at Defiance; Construction of Ft. Winchester as a supply storage and transfer point.
- 1 - 9 Nov     Army moves to encamp on north bank of Maumee River (Camp #2).
- 11 Nov       Army moves to Camp #3.
- 30 Dec       Winchester begins final advance to Maumee Rapids.

### 1813

- 10 Jan       Winchester force arrives at Maumee Rapids
- 13 Jan       Residents of Frenchtown appeal to Winchester to oust British
- 16 Jan       Winchester holds council of officers to determine course of action.
- 17 Jan       Lieut. Col.'s Allen and Lewis advance to Frenchtown with 660 Kentucky militia.
- 18 Jan       First Battle of Frenchtown. U.S. successfully dislodges British forces. U.S. losses 12 killed and 55 wounded.
- 19 Jan       Procter prepares to retake Frenchtown w/ regulars and Indians from Ft. Malden.
- 20 Jan       Winchester leads reinforcements to Frenchtown, increasing U.S. strength to 1,000 men.
- 22 Jan       Dawn: British forces assemble to attack Frenchtown. Attack quickly shatters the American right flank.  
  
1100: Winchester orders over 500 Kentuckians to surrender. Procter agrees to protect the wounded and prisoners.
- 23 Jan       Indians enter Frenchtown and massacre 80 American sick and wounded. Harrison retreats to the Portage River

### HARRISON'S SPRING OFFENSIVE

- 1 Feb            Gen. Harrison advances to Maumee Rapids with 2,000 militia from PA, OH, VA, and KY.
- 2 Feb            Begin construction of Ft. Meigs on the south bank of the Maumee River.
- 7 Mar            Harrison promoted to Major General and commander of the Eighth Military District comprising the states of Ohio and Kentucky and the territories of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Michigan.
- 2 Apr            Virginia and Pennsylvania militia service expires. Ft. Meigs left with only 500 troops.
- 3 - 26 Apr      Reinforcements arrive at Ft. Meigs. By end of April, Harrison has 1,000 to 1,200 troops.
- 27 Apr           Gen. Procter departs Amherstburg with 984 regulars and militia for rendezvous with Tecumseh and 1,500 Indians.
- 28 Apr           British artillery positioned opposite Ft. Meigs; Indians take up positions in surrounding woods.
- 1 May            British begin bombardment of Ft. Meigs.
- 3 May            British establish flanking battery 300 yards east of Ft. Meigs.
- 4 May            Gen. Clay approaches Ft. Meigs with a reinforcement of 1,200 Kentucky militia.
- 5 May            Col. Dudley leads 800 Kentuckians to capture British guns. After routing the British, the Americans are counterattacked and surrounded.  
  
Gen. Clay reinforces Ft. Meigs with 600 men.  
  
Col. Miller leads 350 men to attack the British flanking battery, takes 41 enemy prisoners.
- 6 May            Procter demands Harrison surrender. Harrison agrees only to exchange prisoners.
- 9 May            British board vessels and return to Amherstburg.

## ORDER OF BATTLE

### NORTHWESTERN ARMY

Brigadier General William Henry Harrison, Commanding

LEFT WING: Brigadier General James Winchester, U.S.A.

Brigadier General John Payne, Kentucky Militia  
 1st Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. John M. Scott  
 4th Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. William Jennings  
 5th Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. William Lewis  
 1st Rifle Regiment, Lt.Col. John Allen

Colonel Samuel Wells, U.S.A.

17th U.S. Infantry Regt., Colonel Samuel Wells  
 w/Detachment 19th U.S. Regt.  
 2nd Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. Joshua Barbee

CENTER WING: Brigadier General Edward Tupper, Ohio Militia

Ohio Mounted Militia Brigade

Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. Robert Pogue

Kentucky Mounted Regiment, Lt.Col. Richard M. Johnson

RIGHT WING: Brigadier General William Henry Harrison, U.S.

Ohio Brigade, Brigadier General Simon Perkins  
 Ohio Militia Regiment, Col. John Andrews

Virginia Brigade, Brigadier General Joel Leftwich

Second Pennsylvania Brigade, Brig. Gen. Richard Crook  
 1st Regiment, Lt.Col. Joel Ferree  
 2nd Regiment, Col. Patterson

Kentucky Dragoons, Lt.Col. James Simrall

U.S. Second Light Dragoon Squadron, Maj. James V. Babbitt

19th U.S. Infantry Regiment, Lt.Col. John B. Campbell

Pittsburgh Blues Vol (PA), Cpt James Butler

Artillery - 28 pieces, various calibers

**BATTLE OF FRENCHTOWN  
22 JANUARY 1813**

**U.S. FORCES**

Brigadier General James Winchester

Seventeenth U.S. Infantry Regiment, Colonel Samuel Wells

Fifth Kentucky Volunteer Regiment, Lt.Col. William Lewis  
2nd Battalion, Major Benjamin Graves

First Kentucky Rifle Regiment, Lt. Col. John Allen  
2nd Battalion, Major George Madison

First Kentucky Volunteer Regiment, Maj. Richard M. Gano  
2nd Battalion, Major Elijah McClanahan

Ranger Company (Spies), Cpt Henry James

Volunteer Light Dragoons, Cpt William Garrard

**BRITISH FORCES**

Colonel Henry Procter

Forty-First Regiment of Foot, Lt.Col. St. George

Essex Militia

Marine Department

Indian Department

Indian Auxiliaries, Chief Roundhead

Royal Artillery

3 Three-pounder Guns  
3 Howitzers



**TOTAL EFFECTIVES**

U.S. FORCES	Total	934
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## BRITISH FORCES

Regulars	327
Militia	210
Miscellaneous	60
Indians	600-800

Total 1200-1400

## CASUALTIES

U.S. 300 est. KIA, ? WIA, 525+ POW

British            24 KIA, 158 WIA

Indian	Unknown
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
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100	100

# ORDER OF BATTLE - BATTLE OF FORT MEIGS 1 - 5 May 1813

## U.S. FORCES

Major General William Henry Harrison

### AT FT. MEIGS:

Nineteenth U.S. Infantry Regiment, Col. John Miller

- Cpt Nearing's company
- Cpt Langham's company
- Cpt Elliott's company
- Cpt Waring's company
- Cpt Croghan's company (17th U.S.) - attached
- Cpt Bradford's company (17th U.S.) - attached

Independent Battalion of Volunteers, Major John B. Alexander

- Pittsburg Blues, Cpt James R. Butler
- Petersburg Volunteers, Cpt Richard McRae
- Greensburgh Riflemen, Lt Peter Drum

Kentucky Militia Battalion, Maj Johnson

Ohio Militia Regiment, Col. Mills

- Pitzer's Battalion
- Lodwick's Battalion

Ball's Squadron, U.S. Dragoons, Major James V. Ball

- Westmoreland Light Dragoons (PA), Cpt Joseph Markell
- McClelland's Light Dragoons (PA), Cpt James McClelland
- Lee's Troop, Cornet Lee
- 3rd Company, Light Dragoons (PA), Cpt Thomas Warren
- 4th Company, Light Dragoons (PA), Cpt Thomas Seely
- Pearce's Troop, Cpt Pearce
- Garrard's Troop, (KY), Cpt Garrard
- U.S. Light Dragoons, Cpt Hopkins

Artillery Detachment, Major Amos Stoddard

2nd U.S. Heavy Artillery Company, Cpt Daniel Cushing

GUNS: 5 - 18 pdr  
6 - 12 pdr  
6 - 6 pdr  
3 - howitzers

### REINFORCEMENTS:

Kentucky Volunteer Brigade, Brig. Gen. Green Clay

- 13th Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. William Dudley
- 10th Kentucky Regiment, Lt.Col. William Boswell

## BRITISH FORCES

Brigadier General Henry A. Procter

Forty-First Regiment of Foot, Lt.Col. Augustus Warburton

Royal Newfoundland Regiment, Cpt Mockler

Militia Contingent

1st Essex Regiment  
2nd Essex Regiment  
Kent Regiment

Indian Auxiliaries, Tecumseh and Roundhead

Royal Artillery, Cpt Dixon

### Main Batteries

2 24 pounder  
3 12 pounder  
1 8 in Howitzer  
2 5.5 in. Mortar

### Flanking Battery

1 six-pounder  
1 5.5 in Howitzer  
1 5.5 in. Mortar

Marine Detachment, Commodore Hall

Gunboat Eliza - 1 9 pounder  
Gunboat Myers - 1 9 pounder

## TOTAL EFFECTIVES

### U.S.

At Ft. Meigs	1,100-1,200
Reinforcements	1419
Total	2,500-2,600

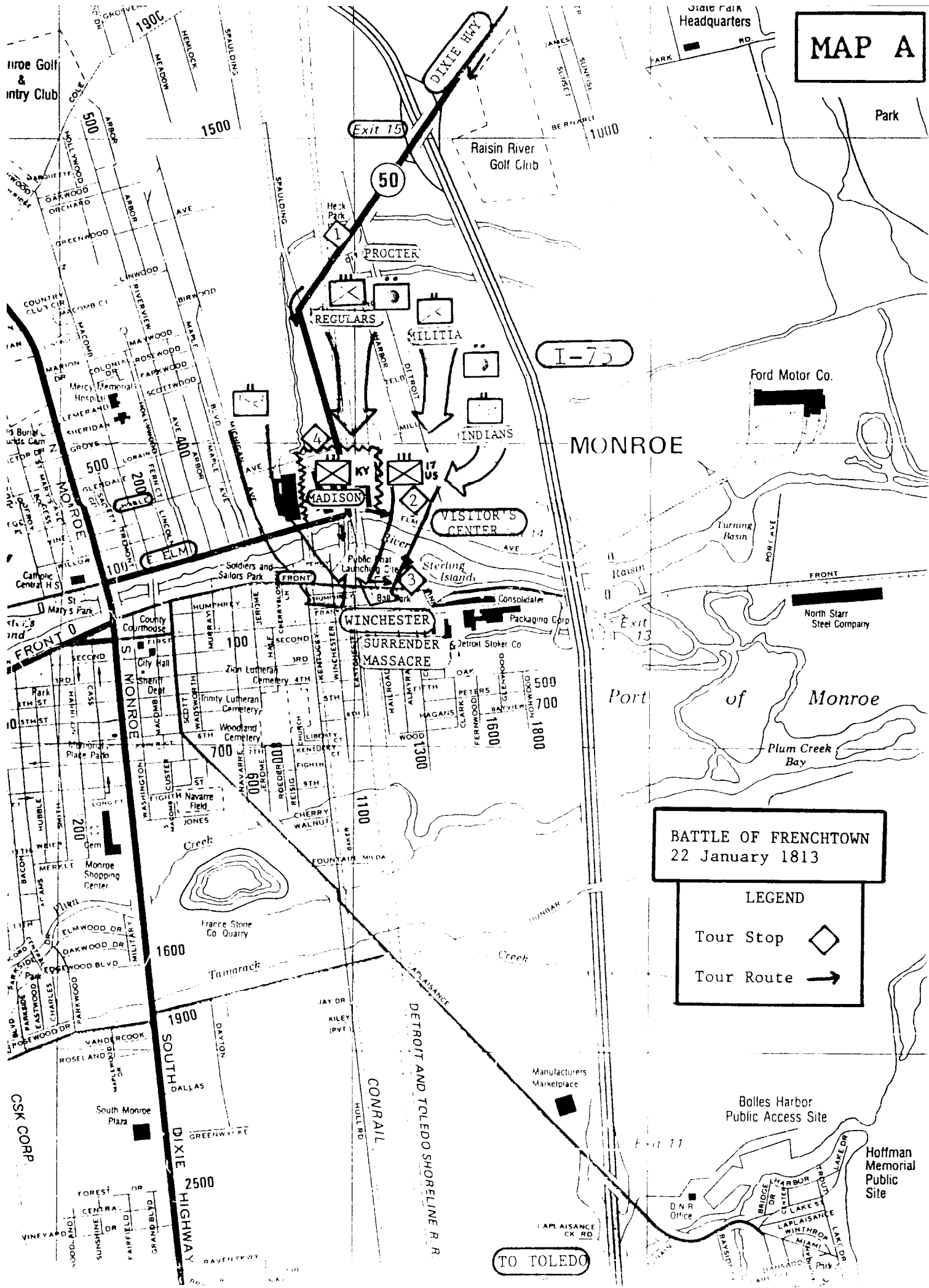
### BRITISH

Regulars & Militia	984
Indians	1,200-1,500
Total	2,184-2,484

### CASUALTIES


U.S.	130 KIA, 189 WIA, 600+ POW
British	14 KIA, 47 WIA, 41 POW
Indians	Unknown


# MAP A



BATTLE OF FRENCHTOWN  
22 January 1813

## LEGEND

Tour Stop 

Tour Route 

## SELF-GUIDED TOUR

Monroe, Michigan is located approximately halfway between Toledo, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan. It is easily accessible from Interstate 75. The best way to begin the self-guided tour is to exit I-75 at exit 15. **(See Map A)** After you exit, turn south onto Dixie Highway M-50 (left if you are going north; right if you are traveling south). You will see a sign indicating the direction to the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor's Center.

### STOP #1 - BRITISH ASSEMBLY AREA (HECK PARK)

After crossing the I-75 interchange, you will travel southwest along Dixie Highway, M-50. Look for a sign for Heck Park or the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on your right. From the road, you will see a UH-1 helicopter on display in Heck Park. Turn right into the park and park your vehicle near the Veterans Memorial. About 25 yards behind the helicopter, you will see a historical marker about the Battle of Frenchtown. Walk over to the marker.



Site of the British assembly area prior to the battle of Frenchtown, January 22, 1813. Heck Park, Monroe, Michigan.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This site marks the approximate position where the British and Indian forces commanded by Col. Henry Procter assembled prior to launching their dawn attack on the unsuspecting American positions on 22 January 1812. Their direction of attack was due south, across the road in front of you and parallel to Detroit Ave **(See unit positions Map A)** The following account by British Ensign John Richardson tells of the British march to this site:

Colonel Procter, with a promptness and decision which it is to be regretted had not marked his subsequent operations, resolved on an instant advance upon the captured position, before the enemy could have time to fortify it. . . No sight could be more beautiful than the departure of this little army from Amherstburg. It was the depth of winter; and the river at the point we crossed being four miles in breadth, the deep rumbling noise of the guns prolonging their reverberations like the roar of distant thunder, as they moved along the ice, mingled with the wild cries of the Indians, seemed to threaten some convulsion of nature; while the appearance of the troops winding along the road, now lost behind some cliff of rugged ice, now emerging into view, their polished arms glittering in the sunbeams, gave an air of romantic grandeur to the scene.

The British camped about five miles from the present position on the night of the 21st. Richardson continues:

Two hours before dawn, and we were again upon the advance to the River Raisin, and on the 22nd, before daybreak, came within sight of the enemy. . . Such was their security and negligence that they had not thrown out a single picket, and our line was actually half formed within musket shot of their defenses, before they were aware even of our presence.

#### POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. British ability to react and seize the initiative in response to the American capture of Frenchtown on 18 January 1813.
2. British use of the principle of surprise as a combat multiplier.



Historical marker at British attack position 22 January 1813.

## **STOP #2 - U.S. RIGHT FLANK POSITION AND BATTLEFIELD VISITOR'S CENTER**

Return to your vehicle and exit the park. Turn right (south) onto Dixie Highway. Follow the road for about .75 of a mile until you come to the stoplight at the corner of Dixie and East Elm Avenue. You will see a sign directing you to the Battlefield Visitor's Center. Turn left (east) onto Elm. Travel east on Elm for about .5 miles, until you see the visitor's center on your left. Turn into the parking lot.

The visitors center contains an interesting display of information and artifacts about the battles in January 1813. There is an excellent graphic display panel in front of the building that illustrates the positions of key units and the events of the battle. If you go inside the center, you can view an electric map program that gives a full description of the campaigns of the War of 1812 in the Northwest and the Battle of Frenchtown. Plan to spend about 45 minutes if you go inside the center. If the visitor's center is not open, or you choose not to go in, you can still tour this site.



River Raisin Battlefield Visitor's Center, Monroe, Michigan

Walk to the open field behind the building. This is the approximate position where Col. Wells' 17th U.S. Infantry Regiment encamped the night before the battle. Walk over and read the historical marker indicating the situation of the 17th Infantry Regiment.



Historical marker indicating the location of the American right flank

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The 17th Infantry Regiment had arrived on the 21st and occupied an open field without protection from enemy fire. Though the position could have, and should have been fortified, it was not, because of a planned move the next day. Even though it was a regular regiment, the 17th had been in service only since August and had the experience level of a militia unit. It had also suffered during the winter from lack of wool clothing, shoes, coats, and other essential supplies and equipment. As you face to the north, you are looking toward the British position that you visited at the previous stop.

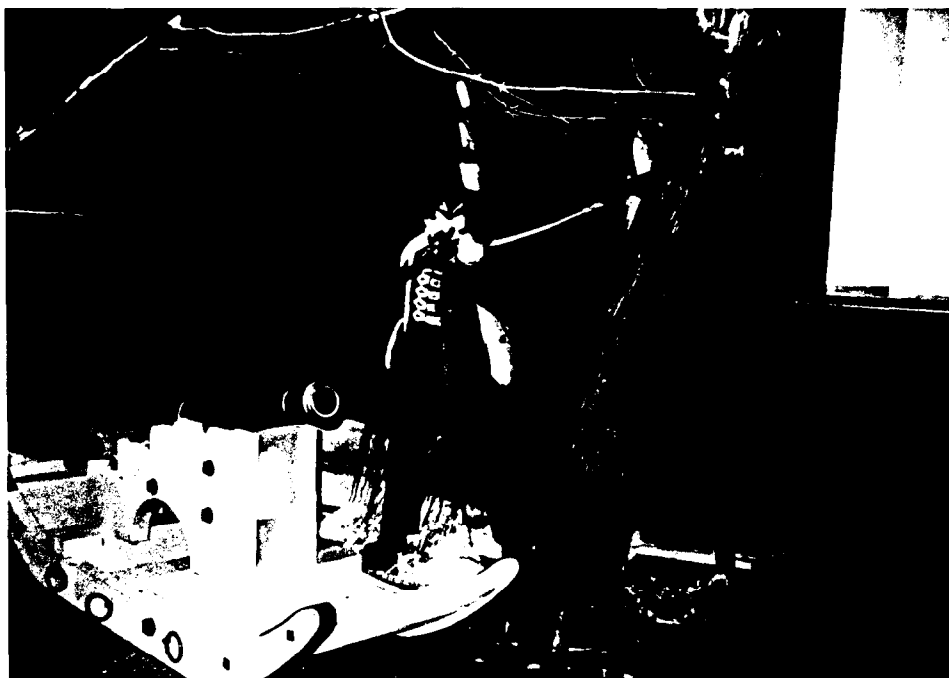


The British attacked from the direction indicated in the photo.  
The American regulars occupied the open field without protection.



The British did not achieve a complete surprise, and it cost them heavily on the American left flank. Ensign Richardson described the attack from the British perspective.

**The conduct of Colonel Procter on this occasion has ever been a matter of astonishment to me. . . The Americans were lying in their beds undressed and unarmed and a prompt and forward movement of the line, either would have enabled us to have taken them with the bayonet at advantage. . . Instead of this, he commenced firing his three-pounders in answer to the alarm of the sentinels who, at length perceiving us, had rapidly discharged their muskets- thus affording them time and facility for arming and occupying the only position from which they could seriously check our advance.**



Display of British soldier and 6-pound field gun inside the Visitor's Center.

Now read the account of Kentucky militiaman Elias Darnell of the action that occurred on this site:

**The reveille had not been beating more than two minutes before the sentinels fired three guns in quick succession; this alarmed our troops, who quickly formed and were ready for the enemy before they were near enough to do execution. The British immediately discharged their artillery, loaded with balls, bombs and grape-shot, which did little injury; they then attempted to make a charge on those in the pickets, but were repulsed with great loss. Those on the right being less secure for want of fortification, were overpowered by a superior force, and were ordered to retreat to a more advantageous piece of ground. They got in disorder and could not be formed. The Indians pursued them from all quarters, and surrounded, killed, and took most of them.**

Turn around from this marker and look south opposite the direction of the British attack, toward the Raisin River. You may walk over to the river, but take care crossing Elm Avenue. The American right flank retreated across the river, which was frozen at the time, toward the road to the Miami Rapids. However, only 31 men from the 17th made it back to the rendezvous point at the rapids.



View looking south across the River Raisin in the direction of the American retreat.

#### **POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Failure of the Americans to construct a defensive position and the neglect of the principle of security.
2. The loss of command and control by Winchester, both before and during the retreat across the river.

#### **STOP #3 - HELLENBERG FIELD AND PARK**

Depart the visitors center by turning right (west) onto Elm and proceed toward the intersection you came from. At the traffic light, turn left (south) and cross the bridge. Once over the bridge the road will veer slightly to the right and become Winchester Ave. Travel .25 of a mile to Front Street. Turn left (east) onto Front Street. You will cross two steep railroad embankments. Please use caution and take care to watch for trains since there are no warning signals at the tracks. Travel about 200 yards further and you will see the entrance to Hellenberg Park. Turn left into the park and drive over near the foot bridge to Sterling Island. You will see a historical marker. Park your vehicle and walk over to the marker.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This is the general vicinity where many Americans were surrounded and massacred by the Indians. You can look across the river and see the direction from where the Americans retreated. Read the following account by a witness to the massacres. Thomas P. Dudley was one of the survivors.

**The morning of the massacre, between daybreak and sunrise, the Indians were seen approaching the houses sheltering the wounded. . . Pretty soon they came crowding into the room where we were. . . When they turned to leave the room, just as he turned the Indians tomahawked Captain Hickman in less than six feet from me. . . A few minutes after leaving the room. . . and while standing in the snow eighteen inches deep, the Indians brought Captain Hickman out on the porch, stripped of clothing except a flannel shirt, and tossed him out on the snow within a few feet of him, after which he breathed once or twice and expired. . . While standing in the snow two or three Indians approached me at different times, and I made signs that the ball I received was still in my shoulder. They shook their heads, leaving the impression that they designed a more horrid death for me. I felt that it would be a mercy to me if they would shoot me down at once and put me out of my misery.**

**POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Indian policy toward treatment of wounded and prisoners.
2. British policy toward prisoners, the laws of war, and parole.

**STOP #4 - SITE OF AMERICAN SURRENDER**

Leave the park and go back in the same direction you came from. At the corner of Front Street and Winchester, make a right onto Winchester and go north across the bridge you crossed before. Travel north for about .75 miles and you will see the F.O.E. building on the left at the corner of Noble avenue. You will also see a historical marker at the edge of the parking lot. Turn left (west) onto Noble avenue and into the parking lot.



Site of the American surrender at Frenchtown, January 22, 1813

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This is the approximate site of the surrender of the Kentuckians now under command of Major George Madison. The position was fairly strong and the British made numerous assaults, that cost them many casualties. Read the description by Elias Darnell who witnessed the events:

Our men lay close behind the picketing, through which they had portholes, and every one having a rest took sight, that his ammunition might not be spent in vain. After a long and bloody contest, the enemy finding they could not drive us from our fortification, retired to the woods, leaving their dead on the ground, except a party that kept two pieces of cannon in play on our right. . . At this time bread from the commissary's house was handed round among our troops, who sat composedly eating and watching the enemy at the same time. Being thus refreshed, we discovered a white flag advancing toward us. . . We were surprised and mortified when we heard that Gen. Winchester, with Col. Lewis, had been taken prisoners by the Indians in attempting to rally the right wing, and that Gen. Winchester had surrendered us prisoners of war to Col. Procter! Major Madison. . . did not agree to this until Col. Procter had promised that the prisoners should be protected from the Indians, the wounded taken care of, the dead collected and buried. . . It was then with extreme reluctance our troops accepted this proposition; there was scarcely a person that could refrain from shedding tears! Some plead with the officers not to surrender, saying they would rather die on the field! We had only five killed, and twenty-five or thirty wounded, inside of the pickets.

The Kentuckians had suffered through a severe campaign, which may have affected them more than the battle. Richardson described the Americans as they were led into captivity:

**The appearance of the American prisoners captured at Frenchtown was miserable to the last degree. They had the air of men to whom cleanliness was a virtue unknown, and their squalid bodies were covered by habiliments that had evidently undergone every change of season. . . It was the depth of winter; but scarcely an individual was in possession of a great coat or cloak, and few of them wore garments of wool of any description. They still retained their summer dress, consisting of cotton stuff of various colors. . . They were covered with slouched hats, worn bare by constant use, beneath which their long hair fell matted and uncombed over their cheeks. [Dirty blankets were] wrapped around their loins to protect them against the inclemency of the season, and fastened by broad leathern belts, into which were thrust axes and knives of enormous length, gave them an air of wildness and savageness.**

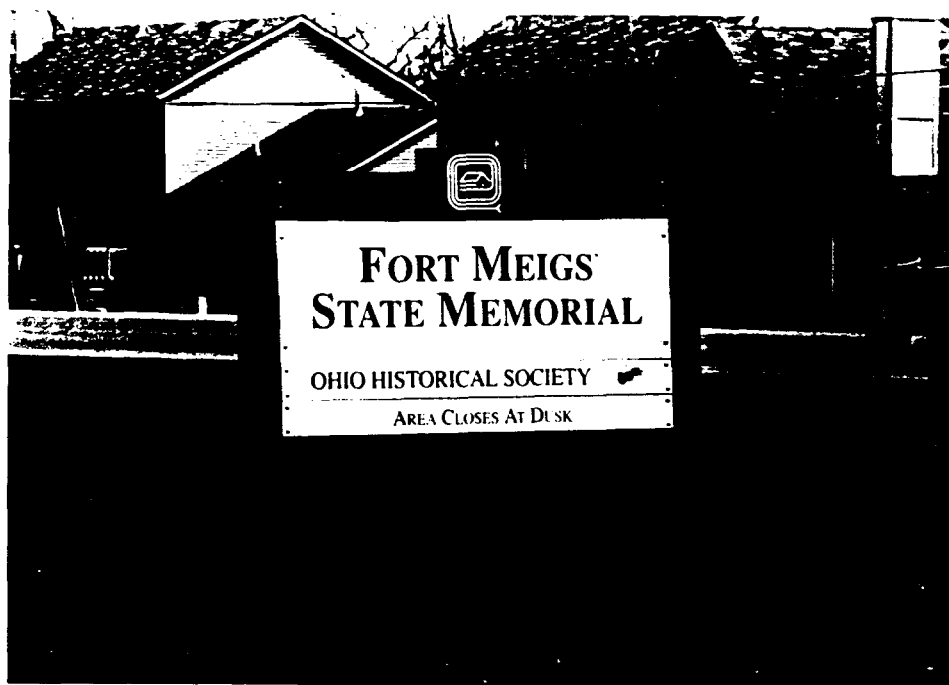
**POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. When should a commander surrender their command? Can someone already captured direct it to be done?
2. The impact of supply and logistics upon the soldiers of Winchester's army.
3. The discipline of the Americans both under fire and as indicated by their appearance.

This ends the tour of the Battle of Frenchtown. It was the second disaster within a year that set back U.S. plans to regain Detroit and advance into Canada. William Henry Harrison now had to reconstitute his forces in Ohio and prepare a defense against an enemy that possessed the agility to strike at any time and any place. The battle of Frenchtown also signaled an unwelcome trend in behavior on behalf of the enemy, as evidenced by Colonel Procter's lack of concern for the American wounded and prisoners. American resolve was thus galvanized to avenge the deaths at Frenchtown and was expressed in the Kentucky battle cry, "Remember the River Raisin!"

## BATTLE OF FORT MEIGS SELF-GUIDED TOUR

There are two ways to begin this portion of the tour. If you are planning to study the battle separately from the complete campaign, the best approach to Fort Meigs is from I-475. Exit I-475 at Exit 2 (Perrysburg). Head north on Ohio 25 and you will see a sign pointing to Ft. Meigs. **(See Map B)** If you are continuing from Stop #4, take I-75 south towards Toledo. Do not take the first exit for I-475 north of Toledo, you should go through the city and cross the Maumee River. After crossing the Maumee River, look for signs for I-475 and Perrysburg. After exiting I-75 onto I-475, the next exit is exit 2 (Perrysburg). After about a mile, Ohio 25 will veer toward the left and become West Boundary Street. At the intersection of Ohio 25 and Ohio 65, at the traffic light, you will see a sign for Ft. Meigs to the left. Make a left (west) onto Ohio 65, West Boundary Road. Travel about a half a mile and you will see Ft. Meigs on the right. Drive into the parking lot and walk to the fort. Depending on the time of year, the fort may be open and you may have to pay a nominal admission fee. If the fort is not open, or not staffed, you can still visit the site by walking around the perimeter.




Fort Meigs is located on the south bank of the Maumee River  
in Perrysburg, Ohio

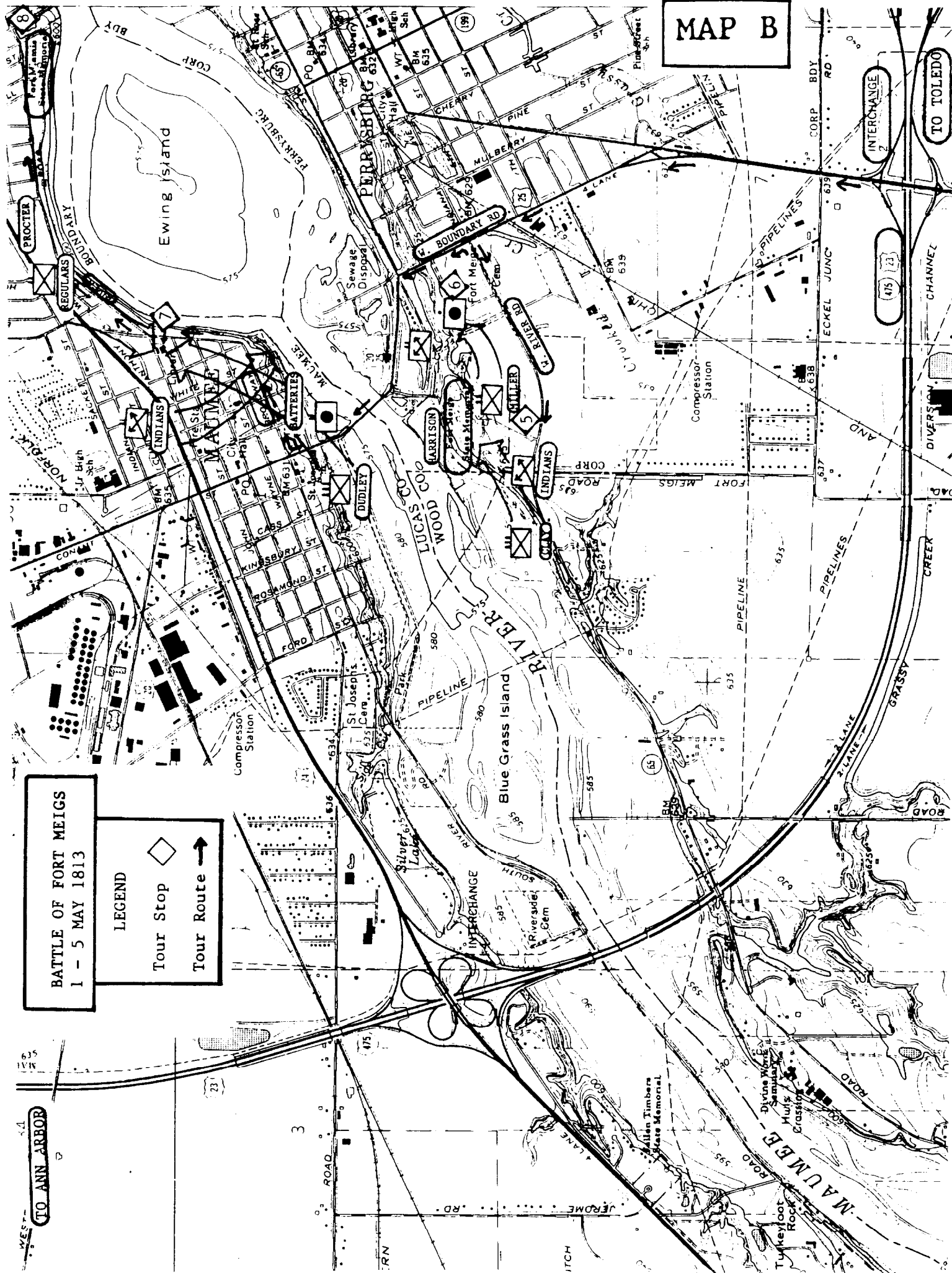
# MAP B

BATTLE OF FORT MEIGS  
1 - 5 MAY 1813

## LEGEND

Tour Stop 

Tour Route 



TO ANN ARBOR

INTERCHANGE 2

TO TOLEDO

## STOP #5 - FORT MEIGS

As you enter the fort you can see that it was an extensive fortification, large enough for the 1,100 to 1,200 men Harrison managed to gather there by the end of April 1813. The fort has been reconstructed to depict it as it would have been during the siege and battle in 1813. There are excellent displays in the blockhouses that explain to visitors how the fort was constructed and the events of the battle.



Exterior view of Ft. Meigs, Perrysburg, Ohio

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Fort Meigs was important for a number of reasons. Harrison had planned for the rally point of the Northwestern Army to be the Maumee Rapids, just below the fort. Harrison chose this location because it would allow either an advance over land or by water to Detroit. After the disaster at Frenchtown, Ft. Meigs became the northern-most of Harrison's supply forts. Over the rivers and roads, supplies and reinforcements were planned to flow to Ft. Meigs. Harrison soon realized however, that the American presence would invite an attack from the British.

### POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Logistic considerations (transportation and supply) over long distances and through the wilderness during the winter months.
2. The limited manpower available to Harrison to build the fort.



Walk toward the center of the fort, near the small interpreters building and read a description of the fort by Captain Daniel Cushing, a regular U.S. artillery officer who took part in the preparation of the defensive works:

The first thing after we arrived here was to put ourselves in a posture of defense, two large and two small batteries was got under way, 8 large Block Houses two Large Houses for provisions, those Block houses are on different angles of the camp, at the same time we are stockading our Camp, this Garrison covers about 8 acres of ground, the work that has [been] done here is beyond what any person would thought could be accomplished in the time it was. There is not a stronger place of defense in the States than this is at this time. . . . [After the British were sighted on 27 April] it was proposed to throw up a [traverse] [through] our camp of about 10 feet high, the breath was lain out and all hands to work, the length of our Camp is about 60 rods, the base of the traverse is 18 feet, this [body] of earth was hove up in 3 days which when done looked like a long ridge of mountains intercepted with small hills, for we hove up short traverses from the main traverse in different directions [through] the camp in order to inflide the fire of the Indians on this side.



View of blockhouse, stockade, and traverse.



View of the traverse running almost 300 yards through the length of the fort. Smaller traverses can be seen at right angles to the main earthwork.

As you walk within the fort, read an account of the arrival of the troops, including General Harrison, to get an idea of the activity that took place to ready the defenses:

**Monday 12 April** - Gen. Harrison arrived here this day; Col. Miller with him with 100 regulars and 100 militia; had forage and salt on the boats. Capt. Nering commanded the regulars. I fired a salute on General Harrison's arrival, 15 guns - 10 sixes and 5 eighteens.

**Tuesday 13 April** - This day is a day of general fatigue; both officers and soldiers employed in building breastworks, repairing the pickets, laying blockhouse floors, repairing the grand battery, digging well, digging up stumps and cutting and fetching puncheons for the floors of the blockhouses.

**Wednesday 14 April** - This day Capt. Hamilton arrived here with 50 militia from Butler county. The men all employed as they were yesterday. We are expecting the British and Indians to attack us every night.

**Thursday 15 April** - Very cold and windy. One of the sentinels shot a horse last night supposing it to be an Indian.



Ft. Meigs interpreter in the uniform of the U.S. 2nd Artillery Company, Cushings Battery.

Now walk over to the Northwest corner of the fort, the location of the Grand Battery, where Harrison spent much of his time observing the British activity on the far side of the river.



The Grand Battery where the 18-pound guns were positioned. The Maumee River is in the background.

From this position, you can see the Maumee River and the flood plain. The point where the bridge joins the opposite bank is the position of the British batteries, near the white church steeple towards the right.



The location of the British batteries opposite Ft. Meigs.  
The fort was bombarded from where the bridge joins the  
opposite bank, near the white church steeple.

The Americans observed the British constructing the batteries several days before the attack and therefore were prepared for the impending battle. Harrison issued the following General Order to his troops on 29 April.

#### Head Quarters Camp Meigs April 29th 813

**It is at length reduced to certainty that the enemy are about to carry into effect their threatened attack upon this post. . . Can the Citizens of a free Country who have taken up arms to defend its Rights think of submitting to a band composed of the mercenaries of reluctant Canadians goaded to the field by the Bayonet & of Wretched Naked Savages - Can the breast of an American Soldier when he casts his eyes to the opposite shore,. . . be influenced by any other feeling than the hopes of Victory & Glory - is not this Army composed of the same materials with that which fought and conquered under the immortal Wayne - Yes Fellow Soldiers your General sees your countenances beam with the same fire that he witnessed upon that glorious occasion [at Fallen Timbers] - And altho' it would be the height of presumption to compare himself to [Wayne] he boasts of being that Hero's pupil - To your posts then fellow Soldiers & remember that the eyes of your Country are upon you.**

The British began their bombardment on Saturday May 1. In addition to the artillery emplacements across the river, they employed two gunboats. Read the account of Captain Cushing about the exchange of fire between the Americans and British that lasted from May 1 to May 5:

**May 1** - At 2 o'clock in the morning the British opened their artillery upon our garrison from their gun-boats, which lay one and one-half miles below us. At 8 o'clock they hoisted the red flag at their lower battery and commenced firing with 24, 12, and 6 pounders and eight inch mortars. They fired at us this day 240 shot and shells; did very little damage. **May 2** - This morning they commenced a heavy fire from all their batteries both with cannonade and bombs, and our camp is completely surrounded with Indians and British keeping up a heavy fire of musketry and rifles. **May 3** - This day we discovered that they had a small battery on this side of the river, about 300 yards on our right flank. They opened on us from that battery one six pounder and one five and a half inch howitzer which made a complete cross-fire through our camp. **May 4** - News that Gen. Clay with his brigade would be here by break of day; this put our camp in motion. Every man was up and preparing for battle.

While standing at the Grand Battery look to your left (west) in the direction where Clay's force approached the fort in eighteen boats. Harrison ordered Clay to divide his force. The regiment commanded by Lt.Col. Dudley was to land on the opposite bank and attack the British batteries. **(See unit positions on Map B)** Clay was to land with his remaining troops near the fort and fight his way through the Indians. Where you are standing now is where Harrison stood and witnessed his plan unfold. Dudley's attack was initially successful, but due to poor command and control the attack proceeded beyond the covering range of the forts guns and into the woods. Instead of returning as ordered, the pursuit resulted in the capture of over 500 Kentuckians. Harrison later reflected on the attack and the performance of the Kentucky militia, for whom he always had a high regard. He wrote:

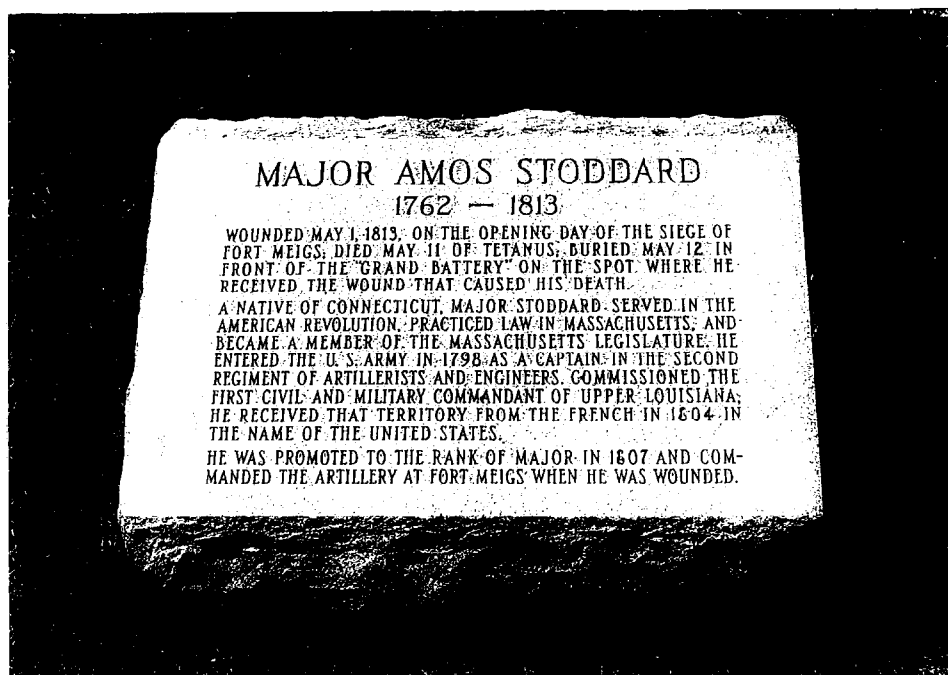
**It is truly painful to reflect that this operation so eminently successful in the commencement should have been brought to an unfortunate Issue - by temerity & disobedience of our troops. . . It rarely occurs that a General has to complain of the excessive ardor of his men yet such appears always to be the case whenever the Kentucky Militia are engaged. It is indeed the source of all their misfortunes - they appear to think that valor can alone accomplish everything.**

That event dampened the other successes of the day. As Dudley's regiment met it's destruction, Clay landed the remainder of his force below the fort towards your left. As he fought his way through the Indians positioned in the woods, Harrison sent troops from the fort to assist him in breaking through. Harrison also sent Col. Miller with about 350 men to silence the British battery on his right flank. Miller's men displayed unusual discipline and executed the attack according to plan and returned to the fort with 42 British prisoners.

The next day Procter demanded Harrison surrender. Harrison considered the demand preposterous in light of the strong position he held. He did agree to an exchange of prisoners, however, trading those captured by Miller for Dudley's unfortunate troops.

During the five day bombardment, the British fired 1676 shells according to Captain Cushing. U.S. casualties were only 12 killed and 20 wounded. Among those casualties was the forts' artillery commander, Major Amos Stoddard, whose grave is marked by a large granite stone behind the Grand Battery. Walk over to the marker and read Cushing's account of his death.

**May 11 - Major Amos Stoddard of the artillery died this evening about 11 o'clock; his death was caused by a wound he received the first day of the siege, caused by a shell bursting over the grand battery. May 12 I had the remains of Major Stoddard buried today in front of the grand battery on the spot where he received the wound which caused his death.**



Marker and grave of Major Stoddard. The Grand Battery can be seen in the background.

After the British departed on May 9 and sailed down the Maumee toward Lake Erie, Harrison congratulated his command for their steadfast performance.

#### Head Quarters Camp Meigs May 9th 1813 Genl Orders

The General congratulates his Troops upon having completely foiled these foes & put a stop to their career of victory which has hitherto attended their arms - He cannot find words to express his sense of the good conduct of the Troops of every description & of every Corps as well in sustaining & returning the heavy fire of the enemy as for their assiduity and patience in the performance of those laborious Duties which the occasion called for.

After you have finished your tour and visit to Fort Meigs, return to your car. The next stop will be the site of the British flanking battery.

#### **STOP #6 - FT. MEIGS CEMETERY**

Exit the parking lot by turning left (east) onto West River Road. Travel about .75 mile until you see the Ft. Meigs cemetery on the left. Turn into the 2nd driveway and proceed to the rear of the cemetery. Near the back is a mausoleum. About 100 feet south of it is a small parking place. Park your car and walk over to the edge of the large ravine in front of you. Once there, carefully walk to the right following a small branch of the ravine. Near that small branch you will see two shallow revetments cut out of the ground.



The remaining earthworks of the British flanking battery located in Ft. Meigs Cemetery, Perrysburg, Ohio.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This was the site of the British flanking batteries established on May 3. The fire from this position did not affect the Americans as greatly as the British had hoped. On May 5, Col. Miller led about 350 men to capture this position. Read the account of Private Nathaniel Vernon of the Pittsburg Blues about the attack.

After having formed on the outside of the fort, our battalion on the right, [John] Miller's infantry on the left, we were joined by a Kentucky company. We were now ordered to advance and fight the enemy in the outskirts of the wood, but having received a pretty severe fire in crossing the space between the fort and the wood which was not returned (our orders being not to fire until we reached the wood) our men became excited and charged fiercely into the wood, driving the enemy, who precipitately fell back upwards of a mile. We now fell back to the edge of the wood followed by the enemy. Again we charged; and again fell back. This alternate charging and retreating continued until we were finally ordered into the fort. On our left Lieut. Campbell with about forty men captured from the British forty privates and two lieutenants who were in the act of crossing the river. Of the three hundred who left the fort, eighty three were either killed or wounded. The company on our right, which had marched out eighty strong, returned with twenty effective men.

#### **POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. The command and control of Miller's attack in contrast to Dudley's operation on the opposite bank of the river.
2. The determination of the American troops while under fire and the high casualties suffered by them in this action.

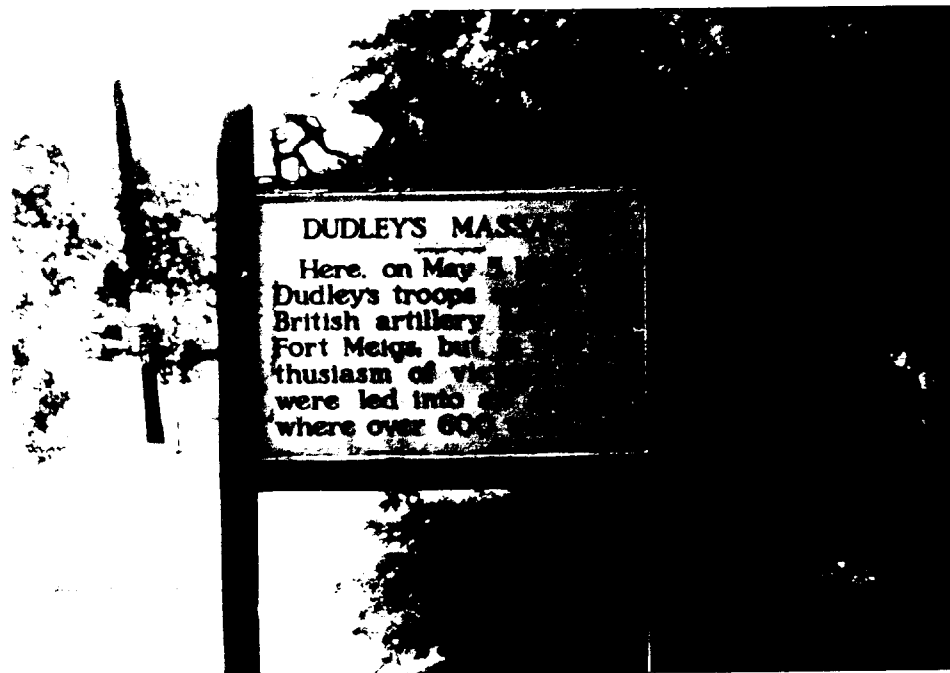
#### **STOP #7 - DUDLEY'S DEFEAT**

Return to your car and exit the cemetery by turning left onto the road. Go back to the intersection of Ohio 25 and 65. At the intersection make a left onto US25 (north). Stay in the left lane as you will be veering left at the next intersection. Follow Ohio 25 across the river to the city of Maumee. At the first light after crossing the river, turn right (east) onto Broadway. After about .75 of a mile Broadway will become River Road. Look for John Street just before the Maumee Public Library. Turn left onto John and you will see the library parking lot. Park your car in the library parking lot and walk to the historical marker commemorating Dudley's defeat along River Road.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This is the approximate location where the British and Indian forces engaged, surrounded, and captured Dudley's regiment. Read the account by Thomas Christian of the attack upon the British batteries and subsequent battle with the British regulars and Indians.



The morning of the memorable 5th of May was dawning. Officers and men were hurrying from boats, and the quick flashes and the keen reports of many guns pronounced the battle commenced. Many were being wounded around me . . . . Officers and men then bounded forward, soon dispersing the besiegers and capturing the guns were ordered to capture. And now flushed with victory, and maddened by the sight of fallen, bleeding and dying comrades our brave Colonel Dudley and men could not resist the desire of following the retreating enemy and wreaking vengeance upon them for the loss of near relatives and friends. So without taking time to roll the captured guns into the river after them we went. But alas! [the enemy] formed an ambush, and securely hid from view, had every advantage . . . . Louder and louder, nearer and nearer came the savage yells of the blood-thirsty foe from every quarter and fainter grew the resistance offered by our thinned and dispirited ranks, until [was heard the] broad command "ground your arms, surrender," pronounced by British officers banishing all hope of successful resistance.



Marker at the site of Dudley's massacre located near the Maumee Public Library.

The British account of the battle is given by Ensign Richardson, who related surprise at the capture of the British guns:

The flying artillerymen had given the alarm, and three companies of the 41st, several of militia, and a body of Indians, the latter under Tecumseh, were ordered to move on the instant, and repossess themselves of the works. The rain, which had commenced early in the morning, continued to fall with violence, and the road. . . was knee-deep with mud. The main body of our small detachment, under Major Muir, advanced against the American left and centre which had deployed into the woods, while Major Chambers boldly attacked their right then occupying the principle battery. On approaching the position he threw away his sword, and seizing the accouterments and musket of a soldier of his own company who had been shot dead a moment before, called out, "Who'll follow me and retake that battery?" I was immediately behind him at the time, and as enthusiastically replied (excited no doubt by the example before me) that I would. . . It is a matter of perfect surprise to me, even at this hour, that our little force, which I have rather overrated, had not been annihilated to a man; for the Americans were in strength. . . Driven from the batteries, the enemy in vain sought for safety in the woods. The murderous fire of the Indians, which had already dispersed their main body, drove them back upon their pursuers, until in the end there was no possibility of escape, and their army was wholly destroyed.

#### **POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. The military discipline within Dudley's regiment that lead to a disregard for Harrison's order to return to the fort after capturing the British guns.
2. The British ability and discipline to react to the American attack upon their batteries.

Now go back to your car and continue the tour to the last stop at the site of the massacre of the American prisoners.

#### **STOP # 8 - FORT MIAMIS STATE MEMORIAL**

Exit the library parking lot onto William Street and turn left onto River Road. Follow the road through the residential neighborhood for about one mile. You will come to a flashing yellow light. To the right you will see the site of Fort Miamis. Turn right into the small parking lot, park your car, and read the historical marker.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This is the site of the old French and British fortification that had been used since about the 1760's. Procter and Tecumseh established their base of operations here where they directed the counter-attack against Dudley's regiment. Once the Americans were defeated, the prisoners were brought back to this position, however the Indians began to mistreat them and killed about 40 of them.



Marker at the site of Ft. Miamis first established by the British in 1794.

Read the account of Thomas Christian about his experience as a prisoner of the Indians.

Captured, brave Dudley is defeated and we are prisoners in savage hands, were the thoughts that then rushed to my mind. . . Now too late we saw the error of surrendering to such a foe, and every soldier keenly felt the difference between dying in the heat of battle, contending for right, and the cold-blooded massacre that now plainly awaited him. For the few British who were with the Indians had no power to control them, the savages threatening to exterminate them if they offered any resistance to their inhuman desire to butcher the prisoners, and did kill one of them in my presence for begging the life of one prisoner. The British hurried us on as rapidly as they could down the river to an old deserted fort where they assured us that we could and should be protected. But the bloody tomahawk was busy along the whole route. . . Lifting my eyes, there stood a few hundred yards off the old deserted fort, with thick lines of savages extending from either side of its entrance to the very spot where I stood, clubbing and tomahawking all they could of the terror-stricken prisoners as they made their wild, panic-race for its entrance. . . To hesitate was instant death, and without further orders each made his individual dash for life through the yelling savage lines with superhuman speed and agility. . . And now it was my time. The way was slippery with human blood and blocked in places by the slain. . . A few more bounds landed me in the fort, or rather slaughter-pen. . . for the savages rudely shoved the British aside and with unearthly yells poured in upon us, killing and scalping as fast as their own crowded ranks would admit. . . Just then, suddenly the yelling ceased. . . and above the groans of the dying, and the prayers of the living, is heard the brave Tecumseh putting a stop to the massacre, shaming his warriors for behaving like squaws.

As you walk through the park, you can gain a good idea of the geography and terrain along the Maumee, as well as an appreciation for the strategic importance of the area to both the Americans and British.



Remains of earthworks of Ft. Miamis. The fort was designed in the Vauban style, using earthworks for protection.

#### **POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. The extensive knowledge both armies had of the Maumee area due to the many previous military campaigns conducted here.
2. Gen. Procter's conduct of not halting the massacre of the prisoners in contrast to Tecumseh extending protection to them.

This stop completes the study of Harrison's spring campaign and the defense of Fort Meigs. The battle for Ft. Meigs from May 1 - 5 proved to be a turning point for the United States. Harrison had established a firm defensive position in Ohio from which he could advance into Canada once U.S. control of Lake Erie was gained. Later in the summer, Procter would again invade Ohio. After a half-hearted attempt to attack Ft. Meigs, then commanded by Gen. Green Clay, Procter moved his army to attack Ft. Stephenson in Fremont, Ohio. He underestimated the ability of the small American garrison, commanded by Maj. George Croghan. Procter ordered his regulars to attack the fort and the effective American response resulted in almost 25% casualties for the British regulars. After that stinging loss, Procter returned to Amherstburg, never again setting foot in the United States. On 10 September 1813, the strategic situation in the Northwest permanently changed when Oliver H. Perry soundly defeated the British fleet commanded by Robert Barclay at the Battle of Lake Erie. Harrison then quickly invaded Canada, recovered Detroit, and eventually defeated the British and Indian forces at the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813. The war for the northwest was over and U.S. territory was restored.

<sup>1</sup>Reginald Horsman, "On to Canada: Manifest Destiny and United States Strategy in the War of 1812," Michigan Historical Review 13 (Fall 1987): 7-12.

<sup>2</sup>Reginald Horsman, The Causes of the War of 1812, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 159-165.

<sup>3</sup>J.C.A. Stagg, "James Madison and the Coercion of Great Britain: Canada, the West Indies, and the War of 1812," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 38 (January 1981): 6.

<sup>4</sup>Coles, War of 1812, 38-39; Hickey, War of 1812, 72-73.

<sup>5</sup>Emory Upton, The Military Policy of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), 92.

<sup>6</sup>Robert J. Dodge, "Nationalism and the Fall of Detroit: 1812," Northwest Ohio Quarterly 40 (Summer 1968): 118-126.

<sup>7</sup>Beverley W. Bond Jr., "William Henry Harrison in the War of 1812," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 13 (March 1932): 500.

<sup>8</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 131.

<sup>9</sup>Winchester was fourth in order of rank as a brigadier general among five appointed on March 27, 1812. Hull ranked fifth, after Winchester. Henry Adams, History of the United States of America During the Administration of James Madison, 1809-1813, Books V and VI. (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1930), 292.

<sup>10</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Cincinnati, 28 August 1812 in Logan Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, Volume II 1812-1816. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922.), 98-99.

<sup>11</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Piqua, 3 Sept. 1812, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 108.

<sup>12</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Cincinnati, 28 August 1812, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 99.

<sup>13</sup>Secretary of War to Harrison, War Department, September 17, 1812, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 136-137.; Gilpin, War of 1812, 143.

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<sup>14</sup>James Winchester, "Papers and Orderly Book of Brigadier General James Winchester," ed., Clarence M. Burton, Michigan Historical Collections 31 (1902): 261.

<sup>15</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 144.

<sup>16</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Piqua, September 27, 1812, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 156-157.

<sup>17</sup>Walden M. Heflinger, "The War of 1812 in Northwestern Ohio: Background and Causes," Northwest Ohio Quarterly 22 (Winter 1949-1950): 9.

<sup>18</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Delaware, December 12, 1812, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 240-244.

<sup>19</sup>His army awaited 10,000 pairs of shoes, 5,000 blankets, 5,000 jackets, and 5,000 wool pants from Philadelphia. The regulars were especially ill-equipped and needed 5,000 blankets, 10,000 pair of shoes, 10,000 pair of socks, and 10,000 pair of long underwear. Winchester, "Orderly Book," 307.

<sup>20</sup>Darnell, Journal, 40; Slocum, "Fort Winchester," 265-266.

<sup>21</sup>Darnell, Journal, 40-42.

<sup>22</sup>Winchester, "Orderly Book," 301.

<sup>23</sup>Darnell, Journal, 42.

<sup>24</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 141.

<sup>25</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 132.

<sup>26</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 163-164

<sup>27</sup>Elias Darnell, A Journal...of the Kentucky Volunteers and Regulars Commanded by General Winchester in...1812-1813, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1854), 47-48; Richardson, Richardson's War, 132-133; Gilpin, War of 1812, 164.

<sup>28</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 165.

<sup>29</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Miami Rapids, 20 January 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 316-317; Gilpin, War of 1812, 165.

<sup>30</sup>Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Fieldbook of the War of 1812, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 354.

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<sup>31</sup>Freeman Cleaves, Old Tippecanoe (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), 141.

<sup>32</sup>Winchester, "Orderly Book," 291.

<sup>33</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 166.

<sup>34</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 134; Gilpin, War of 1812, 167.

<sup>35</sup>Darnell, Journal, 52; Richardson, Richardson's War, 134-135; Gilpin, War of 1812, 167.

<sup>36</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 135; Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 355; Gilpin, War of 1812, 167.

<sup>37</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 355; Cleaves, Old Tippecanoe, 143.

<sup>38</sup>Darnell, Journal, 55.

<sup>39</sup>Winchester to Secretary of War, Malden, Jan 23, 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 327-328.

<sup>40</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 140.

<sup>41</sup>Darnell, Journal, 56-61. Estimates of the American dead range from 220-400. Richardson, Richardson's War, 142-144; Harrison to Secretary of War, Portage, Jan 24, 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 334.

<sup>42</sup>Harrison to Secretary of War, Portage, 24 January 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 331.

<sup>43</sup>Larry L. Nelson, "The Mapping of Fort Meigs," Northwest Ohio Quarterly, 58 (Autumn 1986): 134.

<sup>44</sup>Nelson, "Mapping of Ft. Meigs," 128.

<sup>45</sup>Secretary of War to Harrison, March 17, 1813 and April 3, 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 386 and 412.

<sup>46</sup>Secretary of War to Harrison, War Department, March 5, 1813 and March 7, 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 378-381.

<sup>47</sup>Daniel Cushing, Captain Cushing in the War of 1812, ed. Harlow Lindley, (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944), 96; Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 474.

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- <sup>48</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 475 note 1.
- <sup>49</sup>Cushing, Cushing in the War, 96-101. Assuming 500 men at the fort April 2, Cushing accounts for 855 arrivals and 260 departures from April 3 to 21.
- <sup>50</sup>Harrison to Meigs, HQ Camp Meigs, 28 April 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 429.
- <sup>51</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 165-166.
- <sup>52</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 183.
- <sup>53</sup>Cushing, Cushing in the War, 16.
- <sup>54</sup>Cushing, Cushing in the War, 102-103.
- <sup>55</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 484 note 1.
- <sup>56</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 184.
- <sup>57</sup>Cushing, Cushing in the War, 103; Richardson, Richardson's War, 173.
- <sup>58</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 485.
- <sup>59</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 186-187; Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 485-486.
- <sup>60</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 149-154.
- <sup>61</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 489 note 7.
- <sup>62</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 187.
- <sup>63</sup>In this action the Americans lost 28 killed and 25 wounded, but took 42 British prisoners. Cushing, Cushing in the War, 104; Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 187.
- <sup>64</sup>Cushing reported that the British had fired 1,676 artillery shots into the fort which had killed 12 and wounded 20. The British also reported capturing about 500 prisoners from Dudley's force. Richardson, Richardson's War, 166-170; Cushing, Cushing in the War, 128.
- <sup>65</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 190
- <sup>66</sup> Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook, 488.
- <sup>67</sup>Secretary of War to Harrison, War Department, April 3, 1813, in Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters, 412.



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<sup>68</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 177-178.

<sup>69</sup>Nelson, "Mapping of Ft. Meigs," 130.

<sup>70</sup>Richardson, Richardson's War, 183-185.

<sup>71</sup>Gilpin, War of 1812, 211-212.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 226.